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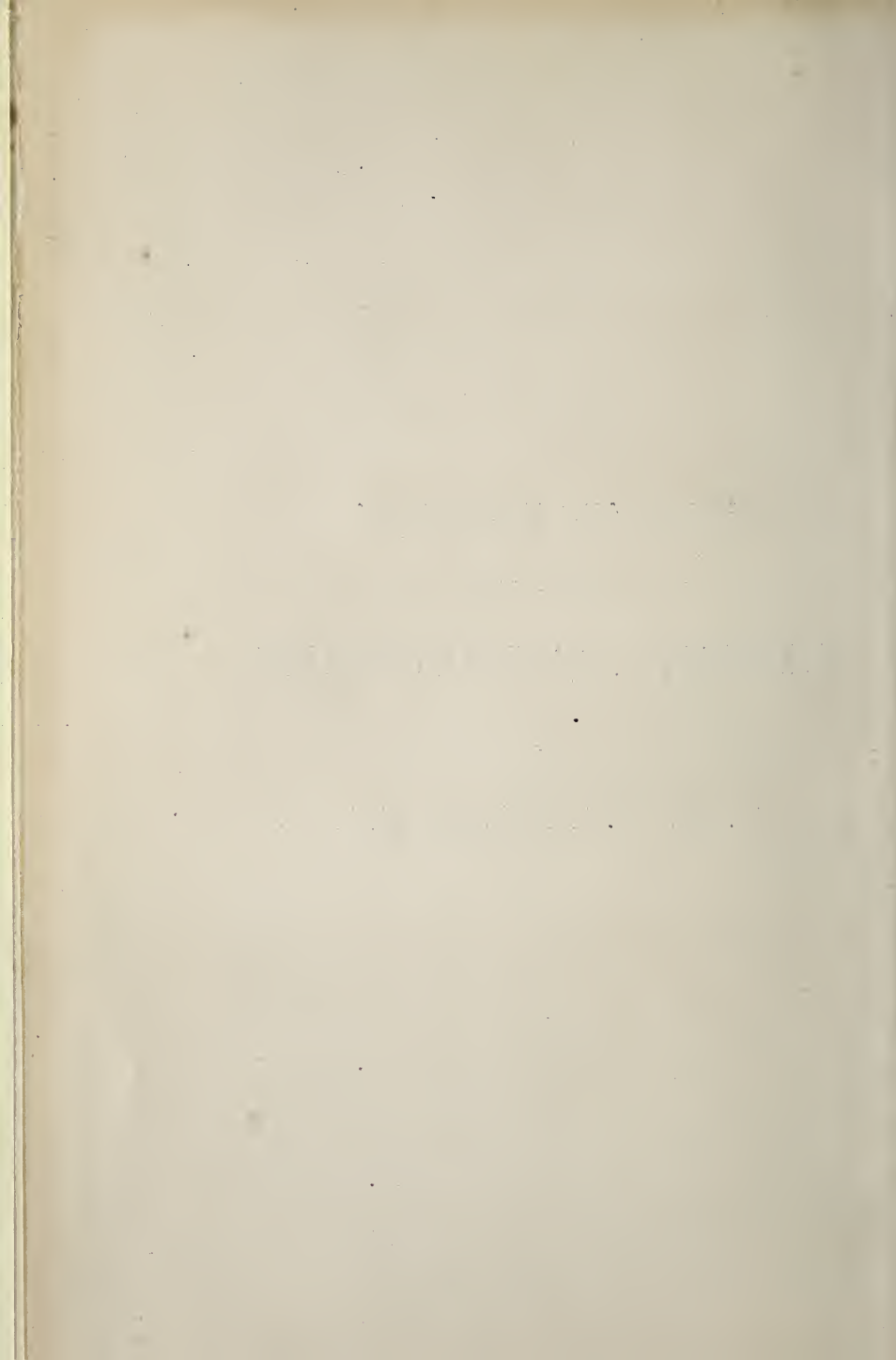
NOTES AND MEMORANDA

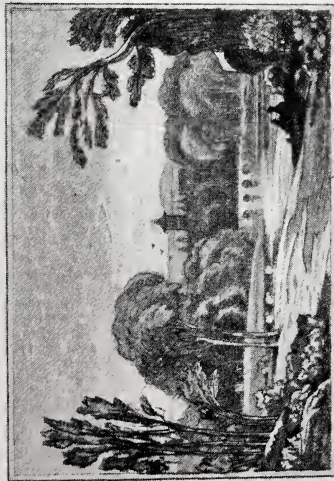
RESPECTING THE

LIBER STUDIORUM

OF

J. M. W. TURNER, R.A.





EPIC.



PASTORAL

E. P.



P.



NOTES AND MEMORANDA

RESPECTING THE

LIBER STUDIORUM

OF

J. M. W. TURNER, R.A.

WRITTEN AND COLLECTED BY THE LATE

JOHN PYE,

LANDSCAPE ENGRAVER.

EDITED, WITH ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS, AND AN
ILLUSTRATIVE ETCHING,

BY

JOHN LEWIS ROGET.

LONDON:

JOHN VAN VOORST, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1879.

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ADVERTISEMENT.



THE chief matters comprised in the following notes were originally intended by the writer to be embodied in a magazine article, or a notice in an art review ; but, the subject growing under his hand, and it seeming desirable to record at the same time various minor facts, which would be inappropriate to that species of publication, it has been thought expedient to deal with the subject in the form of a separate volume.

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NOTES AND MEMORANDA
RESPECTING THE
LIBER STUDIORUM
OF
J. M. W. TURNER, R.A.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory—John Pye's Memoranda of Turner—Pye not one of the Engravers, but an Admirer and Collector of the *Liber*—Public Appreciation of the *Liber*—National Collections—Pye and Ruskin on *Chiaroscuro*—"Tricks" of Light and Shade—Writers on the *Liber*—Ruskin—Burlington Club—Hamerton—Wedmore—Thornbury—Rawlinson—Papers at the British Museum—The *Liber* as a Source of Instruction in Landscape Composition.

THE recent appearance of a descriptive catalogue of the *Liber Studiorum* of Turner affords an occasion, which I have for some time desired, of putting together in a form adapted to publication, some memoranda written by the late Mr. John Pye, the engraver, which were entrusted to me several years ago for perusal, with that object in view.

I am desirous, at the same time, of correcting a

misapprehension which seems to exist with regard to the manuscripts in question.

Pye's long connection with Turner, as one of the most celebrated, and in some respects the most perfect, interpreter of the great painter's meaning, through the medium of line engraving; the mutual high appreciation which was known to have existed between these two artists, amounting in Pye's case to something little short of adoration of Turner's genius; and the fondness and gusto with which the old engraver, who was a capital story-teller, used to relate and dwell on various little traits of the painter's character; coupled with hints thrown out that he had committed to paper some unpublished facts about Turner; led to a prevalent belief that at Pye's death, if not before, much interesting matter would be revealed to the public respecting the great artist's career. This expectation having been referred to in an article by Mr. Wedmore in the *Academy* of Feb. 1, 1879, I on the 8th of the same month addressed a letter to the editor of that journal, which was published on the 15th, expressing my regret that, under the following circumstances, such expectation was not likely to be realized.

All the papers left by Mr. Pye which are supposed by his family to have any bearing on the subject of Turner's life or works, were, shortly after Pye's death, placed by his executor in my hands for the purpose above mentioned. I found them to be very fragmentary documents; and, after

examining and arranging them, came long ago to the conclusion, that beyond a few facts connected with the painter's works (more particularly the *Liber Studiorum*), they contained little or nothing of importance which was not already known to the public. That it was Pye's intention to give to the world a connected history of art, in which an account of the life and works of Turner should form a prominent feature, is, however, indicated by the following draft of a title-page, which is among the documents in question :

"Characteristics of British Art, and how in their midst J. M. W. Turner and Thomas Girtin arose. Chronologically arranged, together with a brief notice of Turner's *Liber Studiorum*, and of the latter part of his life. By John Pye, Corresponding Member of the Institute of France."

With this object, Pye had evidently been engaged after Turner's death, in a diligent collection of material ; but he left the undertaking in a rudimentary state, and recorded next to nothing of his personal recollections of the great painter. Moreover, after the publication of Mr. Thornbury's "Life of Turner" (unsatisfactory as that compilation was), there seems to have been little remaining untold that the old engraver desired to impart to posterity.

It is, however, with the memoranda relating to the *Liber Studiorum*, which, as containing a few new facts of interest, form the above-mentioned exception, that I have here exclusively to deal.

With the production of that remarkable work, Pye himself is not known to have had any connection.* He was purely and exclusively a line engraver, and the *Liber* was engraved in an entirely different manner, chiefly mezzotint. Although, however, he held an exalted opinion of the superiority of the style which he himself practised, he had a profound admiration for these plates, and was never tired of descanting on their beauty. During Turner's life-time he had been at much pains to secure good impressions ; and, shortly before his own death, he sold to the nation, at a moderate price, the fine collection which he had then acquired ; in the belief that by so doing he was conferring an important boon to the public, in setting before students of art a high standard of excellence in landscape composition.

The issue of the *Liber* plates began in 1807, and ended prematurely in 1819,† when 71‡ out of an

* It was erroneously stated, in a "Biographical Note" on John Pye, prefixed to the catalogue of an "Exhibition of Engravings by Birmingham Men," held at that town in the spring of 1877, that he "executed well-known plates for 'Turner's Liber Studiorum ;'" but the error was, I believe, afterwards admitted by the compiler in a letter to a local journal.

† Mr. Hamerton, in his "Life of J. M. W. Turner, R.A.," (p. 109,) says "1816" ; therein adopting one of the many misstatements contained in the late Mr. Thornbury's book, bearing the same title. The error first occurs in the original edition of Thornbury's "Life," published in 1862, (vol. i. p. 272.) In the second edition, dated 1877, (p. 493,) the author remodeled the sentence, without correcting the date, although a full chronological list of the plates is given in an appendix.

‡ Mr. Thornbury, in a summary, appended to his "Life of

intended set of 100, had been completed; but until after Turner's death in 1851, little was known of the work, except by members of the author's profession and a small circle of connoisseurs. It is only since the dispersion by Messrs. Christie & Co. in 1873, within a year of Pye's death, of the large stock of copies, which had remained in the great painter's hands till he died, and had then been taken possession of by the Court of Chancery, that the work has been much known to the general public. Before that time, indeed, about fifty* of the brown

Turner," of Mr. Stokes's catalogue of Turner's engraved works, sets down the number of plates as twenty-one only. Mr. Griffith (Turner's agent and one of his executors), in commenting on the general inaccuracy of Thornbury's book, in a letter to Pye (dated Dec. 21, 1861) observes, however, "I think he is pretty close to the mark in putting the collective number of engravings after Turner at 800, because, although palpably wrong in setting down the *Liber* published plates at twenty-one instead of seventy-one, he has counterbalanced the error as far as figures go, by giving seventy-five to Rogers's 'Italy' instead of twenty-five." Both these errors are, with many others, repeated in the later edition. [See "The Life of J. M. W. Turner, R.A.," 1st edition, vol. ii. p. 352; 2nd edition, p. 551.]

* There were fifty-one so exhibited, but one was for a plate which has never been engraved. They were afterwards removed to Trafalgar Square. Mr. Rawlinson writes:—"Not only are they becoming utterly faded and in other ways deteriorated by continual exposure, but the position given them leads to their being constantly copied by students, who would surely learn more of Turner's intentions in *Liber Studiorum*, if they studied and copied a fine set of the Prints." ["Turner's *Liber Studiorum*;" by W. G. Rawlinson, 1878, p. vii. n.] Since these words were written, and possibly in deference to the opinion expressed by their writer and by others before him, the drawings in question have been removed from the general exhibition rooms, and

drawings, made by Turner for the engravers to work by, had been hung on the walls of a room in the South Kensington Museum ; but the thousands of visitors to that institution were unaware how inferior many of those drawings are to the finished engravings.

placed where, it is to be hoped, they will no longer be exposed to the like injury, but where they are accessible to the public on a special application.

Mr. Ruskin declares that they "are not to be considered as Turner *drawings* at all. They are," he says, "merely hasty indications of his intention, given to the engraver to guide him in his first broad massing out of the shade on the plate. Turner took no care with them, but put his strength only into his own etching on the plate itself, which was repeated and elaborate on the engraver's work. The finer impressions of the plates are infinitely better than these so-called originals, in which there is hardly a trace of Turner's power, and none of his manner. The time bestowed in copying them by some of the students is wholly wasted ; they should copy the engravings only, and chiefly those which were engraved as well as etched by Turner himself." ["Notes on the Turner Collection," 5th edition, 1857, p. 4.] This recommendation must, however, be valued in connection with the same teacher's advice to students as to their method of using the *Liber* plates, the object of which appears to be the training of hand and eye to produce exact fac-similes of lines and shadows. [See "The Elements of Drawing," pp. 132-138.]

Mr. Wedmore writes :—"In the *Mount St. Gothard* subject, in the *Dunstanborough*, and in the *Coast of Yorkshire*, the drawings are more impressive and powerful than the prints. The drawing of the *Falls of the Clyde* has the light *through* the trees, as well as *upon* the trees, as in one engraver's proof belonging to Mr. Stopford Brooke ; and it gains thereby. In all the other drawings for this series in the National Gallery, the effect is inferior to that of the prints ; generally very markedly so, and of all perhaps most markedly so in the exquisite and unsurpassed subject, *Severn and Wye*—a subject well nigh worthless in the 'original

Of the prints themselves, two noble collections are now the property of the nation ; one, in the Art Library at South Kensington, containing a complete set of fine impressions of the plates, in the first state in which they were issued by Turner to the public ; the other, in the Print Room of the British Museum, larger and more interesting to the connoisseur of engraving, and in some respects also to the student of landscape art. For in the latter, which includes the Pye collection, there are more examples of the progressive states of the plates ; showing in various instances the artistic devices employed by the great painter to reinvigorate them when worn ; and how he was ever labouring to inspire them with fresh charms, under new effects of light and shade.

It was chiefly in the mastery over light and shade displayed by Turner in these designs that Pye desired to hold them up as models for the instruction of landscape painters and engravers. The breadth and harmony of *chiaroscuro*, which they exhibit when in a perfect state, were the qualities above all others which recommended them to John Pye. For the representation of light, and the proper distribution of light and darkness within the area of a picture, constituted, in Pye's opinion,

drawing.' The supremely beautiful print of this is wholly of Turner's engraving." ["Studies in English Art," p. 172 *n.*] It may surprise some readers to learn that this plate is marked by Mr. Ruskin ("Elements of Drawing," p. 132 *n.*) as "quite useless" to students. But this opinion may be, in part, accounted for by the writer's dislike to anything which suggests Claude.

the very essence of graphic art. In this respect, his teaching was opposed to that of Mr. Ruskin. In the creed of the late Oxford professor, *chiaroscuro* (in the ordinary sense of the term as used by artists) is a kind of black art, to be repudiated by modern painters. Hence, the eloquent praise which Mr. Ruskin has bestowed upon some (but by no means all) of these plates, leaves almost, if not entirely, untouched the pervading beauty which Pye so much admired.

It is proper to take notice of this omission in Mr. Ruskin's criticisms, because it may have had the effect of diverting attention from some of the qualities to which, in the eyes of persons who do not subscribe to certain of that writer's theories, the *Liber* plates owe an important share of their value. There are, it is true, passages in the first volume of his work on "Modern Painters," which seem to recognize the value of light and shade, or *chiaroscuro*, not only as an element of pictorial art, but as one particularly cultivated by Turner. For example the author writes (3rd edition, pp. 168-170):

"I have before shown the inferiority and unimportance in nature of colour, as a truth, compared with light and shade. That inferiority is maintained and asserted by all really great works of colour; but most by Turner's, as their colour is most intense. Whatever brilliancy he may choose to assume is subjected to an inviolable law of *chiaroscuro*, from which there is no appeal. . . . He paints in colour, but he thinks in light

and shade ; and were it necessary, rather than lose one line of his forms, or one ray of his sunshine, would, I apprehend, be content to paint in black and white to the end of his life." But in the next chapter, the author takes especial pains to point out that his remarks apply only to the painter's *truth* (as a photographer, or imitator of natural lights and shadows), and not at all to the pictorial value of *chiaroscuro* as an element in landscape composition. "My firm belief is," he there explains, (p. 178,) "that though colour is inveighed against by all artists, as the great Circe of art—the great transformer of mind into sensuality—no fondness for it, no study of it, is half so great a peril and stumbling-block to the young student, as the admiration he hears bestowed on such artificial, false and juggling chiaroscuro, and the instruction he receives, based on such principles as that given us by Fuseli, that 'mere natural light and shade, however separately or individually true, is not always legitimate chiaroscuro in art.' It may not always be *agreeable* to a sophisticated, unfeeling, and perverted mind ; but the student had better throw up his art at once, than proceed on the conviction that any other can ever be *legitimate*. I believe I shall be perfectly well able to prove, in the following parts of the work, that 'mere natural light and shade' is the only fit and faithful attendant of the highest art ; and that all tricks—all visible, intended arrangement—all extended shadows and narrow lights—everything, in fact, in the least degree artificial, or tending to make

the mind dwell upon light and shade as such, is an injury, instead of an aid, to conceptions of high ideal dignity."

Now I maintain that no one possessing the sense of form and quantity, and who can tell light from darkness, can fail to perceive, on casting a glance across Pall Mall, at Messrs. Colnaghi's window, full (as it is at the time I write) of fine impressions from the *Liber* plates, that every one of them exhibits such an "arrangement" as Mr. Ruskin denounces in the above words ; one that is "visible" and "artificial," and obviously "intended" by the artist. Each of these is an arrangement which does unquestionably "tend to make the mind dwell upon the light and shade as such ;" yet the great painter did not consider it to be beneath the "ideal dignity" of any, even the grandest and most impressive, of the subjects which he treated. In a subsequent volume (vol. 3, p. 146) the same writer defines the "chiaroscuro" which Constable declared that he regarded as essential to his pictures, as "the light which has nothing to illumine, and shadow which has nothing to relieve." "It is singular to reflect," continues this great master of the English tongue, "what that fatal Chiaroscuro has done to art, in the full extent of its influence," and in conclusion, he enshrouds the subject in this gloomy and poetic figure :—"It has been, not only shadow, but shadow of Death ; passing over the face of ancient art, as death itself might over a fair human countenance ; whispering, as it reduced it to the white projections

and lightless orbits of the skull, 'Thy face shall have nothing else, but it shall have Chiaroscuro.'"

Contrast this with the following words of John Pye's, in a letter* to his friend Dr. Percy: "You are right as to the superiority of the knowledge of nature in the drawings of Turner and Girtin having acquired for them among the *connoisseurs* a preference. Composition and chiaroscuro combined in their works at the close of the last century to acquire for them alike the reputation of having founded the British School of water-colour painting. But that knowledge of chiaroscuro, which gave stamina, light, and space to the works of those original men, has no existence in works of the first-rate men of water-colour in the present day. The effects of their works, with few exceptions, are based in colour. Not a man-jack among them could make an effect of chiaroscuro applicable to the production of an engraving!" It is not, be it observed, merely imitative truth of light and shadow that produces the "effect," but "*composition and chiaroscuro combined.*"

Mr. Hamerton takes exception to a still more recent *dictum* of Mr. Ruskin's, "that all good engraving ignores light and shade;" observing, with much force, that "this doctrine, if it were true, would exclude from the rank of good engraving the entire series of plates from Turner's works, executed by the most eminent landscape-engravers

* The original, dated April 27, 1867, is in the possession of Mr. Reid, the Keeper of Prints.

of this century, for these engravers have never ignored light and shade. Happily," he adds, "the doctrine is not true." ("Life of Turner," p. 390.) Happily, also, the *Liber Studiorum* comes within a saving clause, which exempts it from the operation of this formidable rule; for the professor explains that his words do not apply to *mezzotint*, which "is properly to be considered as chiaroscuro drawing on metal." ("Ariadne Florentina," Ruskin's Works, vol. 7, p. 72.)

It is futile to deny that Turner, besides being like Pye* an earnest student and observer of light itself, was guided by abstract principles of beauty in the *composition* of light and shade within the boundaries of his pictures. It was his thorough appreciation of the efficacy of rules, founded on these principles, principles which are implanted in our nature,† that enabled him to express what he did express, in a pictorial form. We may look at the plates in the *Liber Studiorum*

* "In Pye's opinion, the one great aim in landscape art is to enable the spectator to see, as it were, into space; 'and this,' he said, 'can only be done by a perfect knowledge of light.' To gain this knowledge, he himself would lie for hours on Hampstead Heath studying the spaces, and the gradations required to express them." [*The Spectator*, Feb. 28, 1874.]

† "My notion of nature," says Sir Joshua Reynolds, "comprehends not only the forms which nature produces, but also the nature and internal fabric and organization, as I may call it, of the human mind and imagination. The terms beauty, or nature, which are general ideas, are but different modes of expressing the same thing, whether we apply these terms to statues, poetry, or pictures." ["Seventh Discourse."]

for indications of Turner's views of life, and of human pride, his hopelessness and sadness, and his sense of humiliation and decay. We may trace in them his keen perception of the phenomena of nature, and his firm grasp of their various characteristics; the growth of wood, the hardness of stone; the swell of waves, and the evanescent forms of vapour. But the practical artist will do well to remember that they are, at the same time, a set of very careful “arrangements in brown,” and to observe how much of their effect upon the mind is due to the so-called “tricks” of contrast and gradation, of balance and harmony of parts and masses, which preserve a unity in their variety, and enabled the painter to place each subject plainly and impressively before the spectator. Are not these principles of light and shade exemplified alike in the *clair-obscur* of the great Academician and in the flowing periods of the “Oxford Graduate?”

The above remarks are not made with a view to depreciate the importance of Mr. Ruskin's observations, on those qualities or points in the *Liber Studiorum* which he has considered worthy of notice, and sometimes of enthusiastic laudation. The plates of the *Liber* (published and unpublished) have afforded numerous illustrations of the theories of the accomplished author of “Modern Painters,” on art, on Turner, and on other subjects of human interest; insomuch that it is scarcely possible to think of some of the designs, except in connection with

that writer's witching discourse, or as adorned by the vivid colours of his elucidation. As on nearly all matters connected with Turner's art, Mr. Ruskin remains the fullest and most varied writer on that displayed in the *Liber Studiorum*. But the subject has also proved attractive to other able pens, and a little growth of literature is now springing up around this monument erected by the great painter between sixty and seventy years ago, to his own genius.

In 1872, the chief private possessors of *Liber* prints, etchings, and drawings, united their resources to form a notable exhibition of the *Liber Studiorum*, in its various states, at the Burlington Fine Arts Club, in Savile Row; and the elaborate catalogue,* which accompanied the collection, was, until last year, the most complete book of reference on the subject. Besides a slight historical and descriptive sketch of the work, this catalogue contains a large and interesting selection of illustrative remarks and criticisms from the writings of Ruskin, together with others of much value by Mr. Hamerton, from his elaborate treatise on "Etching and Etchers."

In Mr. Wedmore's agreeable volume of "Studies in English Art," will be found a chapter on the *Liber*, which contains an interesting and systematic

* It was privately printed, but the substance of it has been reprinted with variations, in a catalogue published at Cambridge, Mass. (1874.) There is a copy of the American edition in the excellent Art Library at South Kensington.

account of the work and its workmen, together with an intelligent and tasteful *critique*.

Turner's biographers of course devote some space to the history of a work, the production of which formed so important a feature in the great artist's career ; but Thornbury's general inaccuracy is so palpable, that it is not safe to rely upon his sole testimony ; and Mr. Hamerton, although his remarks have some special value (particularly where he speaks with the authority of a learned expert as to Turner's position and skill as an engraver), has no novel fact to tell us, and is not unfrequently content to adopt, without question, the erroneous statements of his predecessor.

Finally, we have Mr. Rawlinson's new catalogue, which, if the information that it affords respecting the several plates is reasonably correct (which I have no cause to doubt), seems to supply what has been long wanted by *amateurs*, whether students or collectors, of the *Liber Studiorum* of Turner. It is the first attempt to form a complete list of the subjects and states of the plates (including the unpublished designs). It gives, as far as practicable, and in numerical order, the titles (both those engraved and those which have been bestowed by collectors and others) of the several plates ; a plain description of each subject ; a list of known states of each plate and its etching, noting their chief points of distinction ; and a reference to the present place of each known drawing ; concluding in nearly every case with an original notice, in which

useful general information is combined with judicious criticism, and such citation of the writers above mentioned as may be appropriate by way of additional comment or illustration. The volume, being printed on large and good writing paper, with ample margins and blank half pages for additional memoranda in manuscript, and being provided with an alphabetical index, provides a point of concentration of present and future learning on the subject, which must be invaluable to those for whose use it is intended. What we are chiefly concerned with here is an introductory chapter, of forty-seven pages, comprising a brief historical account of the production of the *Liber*, and some general notes under the various heads of "Subjects," "Methods of Engraving," "Deterioration in Printing," "Variations in the Values of Liber," &c.

When Pye sold his collection to the British Museum, he placed some of his own written memoranda, together with other manuscripts respecting the work, in the hands of Mr. Reid, the Keeper of Prints. These documents seem to have previously formed an integral part of the papers whereof the rest are now before me; but having acquired the character of public records, some of them have been reprinted in Mr. Rawlinson's book, and to these I shall have particularly to refer. The other memoranda at the Print-Room relate for the most part to individual impressions in the Pye collection.

In the presence of these sources of information, it is not my purpose to attempt in the following

pages anything in the nature of an exhaustive account of the *Liber Studiorum*, or to afford aid to collectors in the acquisition of rare "states;" nor have I the intention of indulging in original criticism upon Turner or his work. I am content to repeat so much only of what has already been told by others of the history of the *Liber*, as will render intelligible such further facts as are brought to light by the Pye papers; to which, however, I venture to add a few inferences of my own, supporting them by authorities not hitherto cited.

At the same time I am desirous of recording my own conviction that, in some important respects, the value of the *Liber Studiorum* has never been fully appreciated. It has never, as it seems to me, been fairly regarded by writers, or I fear by art-students either, as, what its author declared it to be, "An Illustration of Landscape Composition." Ingenious critics and brilliant essayists have analyzed the choice of subjects, and scanned the incidents portrayed, in order to draw their various inferences respecting the artist's proclivities, and his views of men and things. Amateurs have dwelt fondly on the sentiments that touched them most. Print-collectors have found a wide scope for learning and observation of the distinctive marks of "states" and rare impressions. The fluctuations of the *Liber*-market have afforded lively interest to speculative minds. But of "Landscape Composition," as taught by Turner through the *Liber*, we hear next

to nothing.* Disquisitions on the artistic harmonies of form and mass, on breadth, balance, *chiaroscuro*, and such mysteries of the studio, are not inviting reading to the general public ; and, moreover, the regard for such matters has gone out of fashion with art-critics, and with artists too. Instruction in art being now chiefly confined to the copying or imitation of objects, with less attention than was paid in Turner's earlier time to the relation of one part of a picture to another, the principles of composition, to be acquired by a study of the *Liber*, are no longer much in request. A time may possibly come, however, when Turner's brighter colours shall have faded away, and there shall be little left to reveal his splendour to a future generation, besides his engraved works. It may then be discovered that John Pye was right in holding that the great painter's chief art lay in his "government" of the "clair-obscur."

* The late Mr. J. D. Harding, indeed, in a work addressed to art-students of the last generation, pointed out the superiority of Turner's composition in the *Liber Studiorum* to Claude's in the *Liber Veritatis*, and to that of the "old masters" generally, particularly as regards the expression of space. [See "The Principles and Practice of Art," 1845, p. 65.]

CHAPTER II.

Origin of the *Liber*—Its Intention and Scope—Classification of Landscape—Landseer's "Review"—Historical Style—Pastoral Landscape—E. P.—"Elegant" or "Epic"—Pastoral Class Analyzed—Meaning of "Epic" in Art—Turner's "Death of Nelson"—His Generalization—"Historical-Pastoral"—Varley on Landscape—His "Epic Pastoral"—Identical with Turner's E. P.—Pictorial Unity.

PYE gives the following account of the origin and intent of the *Liber Studiorum*:—

"The patronage of native artistic talent in England, which, till the early part of the reign of George the Third, was limited to portraiture, had not then extended to landscape art more elevated than topographical subjects, *i.e.*, views of the residences of the nobility and wealthy English; castles, &c., &c. That Turner was well acquainted with this state of English art patronage before entering upon the *Liber* speculation, cannot be questioned; for being influenced by a desire to live with posterity in large works of poetic or historic subjects, he had then painted of such works for sale (but which nobody would buy) more than his gallery could hold." Instead, therefore, of painting more pictures "to increase the dead stock in hand, he, in 1807, entered upon the *Liber Studiorum*." He commenced that work "in consequence of having deficiency of employment," and "to demonstrate

that in a work of elementary composition and chiaroscuro" he "could delineate everything that is visible beneath the sun."

The circumstances under which the scheme was first suggested to the painter's mind, and which led him to choose the particular style of art adopted in the publication, are stated in the following words in a letter to Pye from Mr. Charles Turner, the engraver most largely employed by his great namesake in the work in question. "As you are collecting information respecting the *Liber Studiorum* of my most worthy and talented friend, J. M. W. Turner, permit me to say that it was first thought of at the house of his friend, Mr. Wells, as a companion to Claude's *Liber Veritatis*,* and that the first drawing was made for it in his parlour (at Addiscomb)."

"Mr. Wells," adds Pye, "at whose house the *Liber* was projected, was draughtsman at the Military College, Addiscomb. Mr. Turner, when about seventeen years of age, was introduced to him by Sir Robert Ker Porter. That Mr. Turner's inti-

* The first two volumes, only, of Earlom's famous series of mezzotints after Claude's sketches and studies for his pictures had then been published. They are dated 1777; and for them, says Pye, "the public are indebted to the liberality of three successive Dukes of Devonshire. The third volume was published by Hurst and Robinson in 1819. Each of the three volumes contains 100 subjects." A selection of twenty-four of the subjects were re-engraved on steel, by various engravers (some of whom had engraved for Turner's *Liber*), and published in 1824, under the title "Beauties of Claude Lorraine;" and some reproductions in aquatint, by L. Caracciolo, were brought out in Rome, in 1815.

macy with Mr. Wells's family continued to the end of his life, is evinced by his having by his will left a legacy of £100 to each of Mr. Wells's three daughters."

Mr. Thornbury gives a statement by one of Mr. Wells's daughters that the *Liber* entirely owed its existence to her father's persuasion, and that it was he who suggested the division of the subject into classes. She also says, "the drawings for the first number were made in our cottage" (not at Addiscomb, but) "at Knockholt."

On the scope of the *Liber Studiorum* and the principles of landscape art which it is meant to inculcate, it is to be regretted that Pye's memoranda throw but little further light. "When," Pye writes, "I told him I desired to have a copy of the *Liber*, for that I liked it, he said, 'What is there in it that you like?' 'The variety of effects,' was my reply. 'There's nothing else. I want something more than that,' said he." This anecdote appears to have been preserved as evidence of the great artist's preference of line-engraving for landscape.

On the value and interest to be attached to the *Liber* (in the state in which Turner left it) as an illustration of the history of landscape art, Pye expresses himself as follows :—

Had Lewis's plate* been published when it was executed, *i.e.*, in the first part of the *Liber*, the subjects of that work "would have been arranged somewhat in chronological order, and have shown

* The "Bridge and Goats."

the progressive development of Turner's power, during the eleven years the *Liber* was in course of publication, *i.e.*, from 1807 till 1818.* During that time it was," he adds, "that Turner threw off all deference to the works of Claude, Gainsborough, Wilson, and others, to repose solely on his own learning and genius. . . . The neglect of the public caused him to abandon the work when fourteen parts (seventy-one subjects) had been published, notwithstanding some twenty other subjects were in progress of execution." He had, however, thrown into it "not merely the elements of his knowledge of form and *chiaroscuro*, but evidence of his genius in the art of historic and poetic design."

That Turner did intend the series to have some illustrative meaning as a whole seems to be proved not only by his observation, quoted by Mr. Ruskin, "What is the use of them but together?" when he heard of a special value being set on particular prints; but also by the form of the title and announcement of the work.

A prospectus was issued, in 1807, in the following words:—"Proposals for the publishing one hundred Landscapes, to be designed and etched by J. M. W. Turner, R.A., and engraved in Mezzotinto;" and further it says:—"It is intended in this publication to attempt a classification of the various styles of landscape, viz., the historic, mountainous, pastoral, marine, and architectural." Also, on the grey paper

* The last number was dated January 1, 1819.

covers for the parts are printed the words, "No. of LIBER STUDIORUM, Illustrative of *Landscape Compositions*, viz., Historical, Mountainous, Pastoral, Marine, and Architectural."

Mr. Rawlinson states* that "no particulars are known of any advertisement of the *Liber* in its earlier stages." But I find the above "proposals" quoted in a short-lived critical journal called *The Review of Publications in Art*, which was published in 1808, under the editorship of John Landseer,† the engraver. The passage in which they are thus referred to has a direct bearing on Turner's classification of the *Liber* subjects. It occurs in a notice of the pictures then on view in his newly-opened gallery.

"We conceive," says the reviewer,‡ "that Mr. Turner will not find it easy to assign to some of the pictures which he this year exhibits, decided places under the new classification of landscape scenery which he has recently ushered forth in the prospectus of his '*Liber Studiorum*.' His union of the Thames and Isis may without impropriety be called 'pastoral;' but in his Eton College the building is too far off for him to call it an 'architectural' landscape; neither is it 'mountainous,' 'pastoral,' nor 'marine' (at least we cannot suppose that two figures angling from a boat will bring it with propriety under this class); neither is it what Mr. Turner would call 'historical' landscape.

* p. xxix.

† Sir Edwin Landseer's father.

‡ pp. 154, 155.

"We shall, doubtless, be glad to see what an artist of Mr. Turner's mind may have to say on the subject of classifying 'the various styles of landscape;' but if he has specified all those styles in his Prospectus, we conceive that he will find it expedient (if not necessary) to increase *or* diminish the number.

"He has doubtless remarked that a just classification of landscape scenery, if it met with general concurrence, would be a great help to memory. It certainly would; and moreover (besides other facilities) a great step towards rendering the mysteries of refined art more conducive than at present they are to the pleasures of colloquial intercourse, and colloquial intercourse in its turn, by being rendered more critical, more conducive than at present to the advancement of art; but should such a classification be attempted without being arranged on such perennial principles as can only be found in the lasting features of Nature, it will rather tend to embarrass and confound, than to elucidate."

The writer of the above observations did not appear to have examined the plates themselves of the *Liber Studiorum*, of which (according to the dates) two numbers were already published, or he might, perhaps, have had less difficulty in finding a place in Turner's system for "Eton College;" if, as I presume, it was the design afterwards engraved by William Radclyffe in the "England and Wales" series. For the *Liber* itself, from the very first number, embraces one more class beyond the five which were specified in the prospectus, and this

might fairly include the treatment in question of "Eton College."

The particular categories to which the several plates belong are indicated (as everybody knows who is at all acquainted with the work) by capital initial letters placed on their upper margins, H standing for Historical, M for Mountainous or Marine, and so forth.

Among these five divisions, there is but little difficulty in perceiving the fitness of the allotment. Mr. Hamerton, indeed, seems to consider* that the range of subjects embracing poetry and fiction under the letter H, is a wider one than can be justified under the name of "History." But I believe that the term "Historical Painting," which is now falling into disuse, was commonly employed in Turner's time to include such subjects, being not merely applied to the pictorial record of facts.

Questions of greater nicety present themselves, however, respecting the style of landscape to which the painter assigns the name of "Pastoral." Here, in the lettering, he introduced a subdivision into two classes indicated by the letters P. and E. P., without any further explanation, than is to be inferred from the characters of the plates themselves, of the meaning of the new initial E. Of the published plates, which alone are marked by letters of classification, fourteen belong to one and fourteen to the other of these two subdivisions of the pastoral style. It is worthy of observation that

* See "Life of J. M. W. Turner," p. 107.

these were invariably issued in pairs, one P. and one E. P. being contained in each of the fourteen numbers of the work; as if Turner intended to draw, on every such occasion, a distinction between the two subdivisions referred to.* What are the full words intended by this symbol E. P., and what is the style of landscape composition, which the great painter so carefully set apart as a distinct class?

All modern writers, as far as I am aware, on the *Liber Studiorum*, but on what authority I know not, interpret the letters E. P., as “Elegant Pastoral.” Mr. Thornbury† does so in his “Life of Turner.”

* Mr. Rawlinson reprints an advertisement of the eleventh and twelfth numbers of the *Liber* as published (Feb. 1, 1816) “In continuation of the second volume of this work, intended as an illustration of Landscape Composition, classed as follows:—Historical, Mountainous, Pastoral, Marine, and Architectural. Each number,” adds the advertisement, “contains five engravings in mezzotinto; one subject of each class:” &c. It will be observed, that although half the proposed work had appeared, still there was no mention made of a further division of Pastoral into P. and E. P. But the advertisement is inaccurate in other respects. Number 11 did not continue, but commenced the second volume; and (except in the cases of the pastoral, whereof two examples were, as I have said, always given, one of each subclass,) the rule that there should be one subject of each class, was never followed in any single number of the whole series.

† According to Thornbury (second edition, p. 491), Mr. Wells’s daughter, in relating the story of the origin of the *Liber*, named “Elegant Pastoral” as one of the headings originally suggested by her father to Turner; but, it does not seem to be pretended that the exact words used are reported. The passage is as follows:—“My father said, ‘Well, divide your subject into classes—say, Pastoral, Marine, Elegant Pastoral, and so forth;’ which was accordingly done.”

The compiler of the "Burlington Catalogue" does so, and is therein followed by the American transcriber; and Mr. Rawlinson adopts the phrase without question in his "Description and Catalogue." Mr. Hamerton, however, although he does not seem to doubt the correctness of the common interpretation, and regards the "Elegant Pastoral" as being properly a subdivision of the "Pastoral," observes, at the same time, that the distinction is not intelligible in relation to the subjects indicated. Perceiving, moreover, that in some cases the term "Classical Landscape" might be properly applied in the place of "Elegant Pastoral," he surmises that some distinction of this sort was what Turner intended. "We can see a reason," he says, "for the classification in some instances, but not in all. It is probable that if the series of plates had been carried out to the full extent which Turner intended, the classical subjects, for which he had always a predilection, would have been more numerous amongst those which he called 'elegant.' "*"

Pye, however, assigns another adjective to the initial E. He gives, as the full form of E. P., not "*Elegant Pastoral*," but "*Epic Pastoral*." It seems to me that this interpretation is at least as plausible as that commonly received; and that, in the sense in which the epithet was used in Turner's time, it indicates more closely the distinction to which Mr. Hamerton refers under the term "classical pas-

* "Life of Turner," pp. 106, 107.

toral." To form an opinion on this point, however, it is necessary not only to deal with the subject at some length, but to enter into details respecting the plates included in these two divisions of the pastoral class.

Taking the engravings in question two by two, in the order of their publication,* there can, I think, in but few cases, be any difficulty in perceiving that the members of each pair belong to two distinct styles of art, of which that indicated by the letters E. P., aspires in some degree to a poetical ideal, while that marked singly with a P. depicts the more prosaic realities of British rural life. The distinction is admirably illustrated in the very first pair of designs. The painter selected for the opening of the series the two plates familiarly known as "Bridge and Cows," and "Woman and Tambourine." In these, both in subject and treatment, he appears to have intentionally followed the precedents of two of the then acknowledged masters of landscape art, as though he meant to contrast their respective styles. Under P. he shows us the rustic landscape of Gainsborough, and under E. P., he conforms to the ideal of Claude, as exhibited in the *Liber Veritatis*. And so, throughout the series, there is a sufficiently marked contrast between the pair of plates thus lettered, and issued together in the same number. Even without this special contrast, it is generally easy (except in one or two cases, to be mentioned

* A schedule of them is given in an appendix to these pages.

below) to assign to its allotted category any single plate of either series. No one, for example, would expect to see the letters E. P. over the "Strawyard," "Farmyard with Cock," "Juvenile Tricks," "Young Anglers," or "Hedging and Ditching;" and, on the other hand, whatever those letters mean, they seem to be typically applied to the "Bridge and Goats,"* and other distinctly Claudesque landscapes.

We may examine the two series in respect either of the objects depicted, or of the artist's sentiment, and his manner of dealing with them. Of the E. P. series, some eight or nine may be regarded either as direct imitations of Claude, both in subject and treatment, or as versions of subjects chosen from English scenery by reason of a special adaptability to such treatment. Examples of the latter are the "Wye and Severn," "Twickenham," and "Isis." There is nothing of this kind under the head of P., or the simply pastoral landscape. Of that series, ten out of the fourteen are modern rustic subjects taken from every-day life at home. But rural incidents of a like nature are not excluded from the E. P. plates. They occur in the foregrounds of "Okehampton Castle," "St. Catherine's Hill," and "Chepstow." Similarly, ruins of ancient buildings, although so commonly to be found among the E. P. subjects as to raise a presumption that they are an almost essential element in that class of landscape, are as conspicuous in three of the P. series also. It is in the cross infusion, in a

* The subject selected by Turner as the first to be engraved.

few cases, of these two elements, that the difficulty above mentioned arises, respecting the apportionment of a few of the plates. Why, it may be asked, are “Winchelsea,” “East Gate, Winchelsea,” and “Norham Castle,”* marked “P.” simply, while “Okehampton,” “St. Catherine’s Hill,” and “Chepstow,” are placed in the “E. P.” series? In all of them, cows, or sheep, or rustic figures are in the foreground, and an abbey or a castle rises beyond. “Norham” (P.) and “Chepstow” (E. P.) afford between them a problem, to which the solution is exceptionally obscure.

When, indeed, we look at the prevailing sentiment and treatment of the two series of subjects, the difficulty is somewhat lessened. There is a marked contrast between them in respect of the mental states which they are made to induce. The scenes in series P. are generally suggestive of life, movement, and active exertion; while the feeling which pervades the E. P. is always that of repose. Storm and sunshine alternate in the former, while, in the latter, the chastened calm of the landscape seems but a reflex of the placid sky. And the human incidents accord with these opposite sentiments.

* These three (together with “Raglan Castle” of the E. P. series) are erroneously included in the volume lettered “Architectural and Historical Subjects” in the series of photographic reproductions of the *Liber* published by the Autotype Company. An inaccuracy also occurs in the title, whereby the *Liber* is said to be “reproduced from the original etchings”: whereas these are photographs of the mezzotint prints, often from late and altered states of the plates.

In "Okehampton," the cowherd pipes on one side of the road, while the kine ruminates on the other. In "St. Catherine's Hill," the team are returning from their day's work, the milk-maid tends the cows, and the sheep repose on the hill-side. In "Chepstow" (as in the "Clyde") the principal figures are a group of bathers.* Compare with these, or with the leisurely straggling of the goats and goatherds in their passage across the bridge in Lewis's plate, the action of the highland drovers and their herd in "Solway Moss," or the shepherds and their flock, hurrying over the rough ground and among the ruined walls of "East Gate, Winchelsea."†

* Mr. Ruskin's principal objection to the Arcadian landscapes of Claude, seems to be of a negative character. They are not disagreeable enough to satisfy the philosopher's views as to the province of art. Claude "may," he says, "by such tenderness as he possesses, and by the very fact of his banishing painfulness, exercise considerable influence over certain classes of minds; but this influence is almost exclusively hurtful to them." ["Modern Painters," vol. 5, p. 252.] Clearly, the wisdom, which Mr. Ruskin would propagate through the medium of landscape, is not of the kind of which it has been said:—"Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

† Mr. Wedmore observes that Gainsborough and Claude, under whose inspiration the first and second plates of the *Liber* were designed, "had painted the landscape of pleasure. Turner," he adds, "was to paint that in its turn, but chiefly the landscape of conflict Conflict with the hard conditions of life, with the inclemencies of Nature, with the exactions of men—conflict between man and man, between man and beast—conflict, if you can call it so, between the passive earth and the marshalled forces of the sky—these were the things that most impressed the mind of Turner, and these in *Liber Studiorum* find their supreme expression." ["Studies in English Art," pp. 179, 180.]

Another characteristic of the P. series is that the interest as a rule lies in the foreground or nearer part of the landscape. Where a glimpse of distance is introduced, it seems in general to be no more than is necessary to prevent a sense of constraint within too narrow a space. A loophole is thus left for escape, but the eye is, for the time, held by the nearer objects. These are evidently meant by the artist to engage the spectator's chief attention. Even "Solway Moss," which contains much of the "mountainous" element, and includes an extended range of distant space, is no clear exception to the rule; for the level marsh and the herd which cross it form the main subject of the picture. To these the hills and the storm, however grandly suggested, are background and accessory only. Had the painter intended to lead the eye away to the distant highlands, he would probably have reversed the whole course of the action, and made the line of cattle move in that direction, instead of towards the observer.

In the E. P. landscapes, on the other hand, the prospect is generally expanded over a larger area, and the eye attracted to the horizon, or upward to the sky. Such subjects as "Okehampton Castle," "St. Catherine's Hill," "Chepstow," and "Raglan," are seeming, but not real, exceptions; for in all of them the old building is sufficiently remote to take the place of distance, and it moreover forms a poetical object to which the interest is chiefly directed. The same may be said of the waterfall

in the "Clyde." The view of Eton College criticized in Landseer's *Review*, is a composition which might have come under the same category as these. Still, it must be admitted that, in particular examples, the two classes approach each other so nearly as to be almost undistinguishable.

In a few examples we observe some single element which the artist may have considered sufficient to raise the design from the lower to the higher category. In the "Twickenham" view, the classic alcove (probably in the grounds of Pope's villa) from which the plate is sometimes named, supported by the dignified grace of the nearer foliage, gives an air of refinement, to a limited subject, and would justify the title "Elegant," a term which does not accord with the homely buildings in the rear. The old castle walls, with the evening light streaming through its bare mullions, elevate the subject called "Raglan," from what would otherwise be a study of tangled foliage, into a poetic idyl. It is noteworthy that this plate, to which Turner gave no name, but assigned the letters E. P., was issued as the companion and contrast to "Norham Castle" (P.), where the ruin seems to be chiefly employed as a square form, and a mass of shade to heighten the radiance of the sky.

In many cases the word "Elegant" seems entirely inappropriate. Where, for example, is the elegance of the "Hindoo Worshipper," "Woman at a Tank," "Bridge and Goats," or "Magdalen in

Solitude" ?—unless, indeed, Turner considered that the mere transfer of a subject from England to Italy, (as in the closely * contrasted plates of "Winchelsea" and "Bridge and Goats,") had the effect of impressing that quality upon it.

Surely, it would be easy to suggest various other words more expressive of the difference between the two styles, and beginning with an E.; as, for example, "Elevated,"† "Early," or "Eclectic Pastoral." Mr. Ruskin, ‡ regarding the style of Claude as antiquated, might prefer "Exploded" or

* The grouping and action of the figures and animals seem to be intentionally the same in each of these plates, which were issued together.

† Since writing the above sentence I have accidentally met with a passage in which the first of these epithets is used in a parallel case (and with a capital E) by the great painter himself. It is in a letter, written by Turner in 1810 or 1811, in answer to one from John Britton, the antiquary, respecting some descriptive letter-press which that gentleman had written to accompany Pye's celebrated engraving of "Pope's Villa," in "The Fine Arts of the English School," a landscape coming distinctly within the category E. P. of the *Liber* classification. Turner begins thus:—"Sir, I rather lament that the remark which you read to me when I called in Tavistock Place is suppressed, for it espoused the part of Elevated Landscape against the aspersio[ns] of map mak[ers'] criticism; but no doubt you are better acquainted with the nature of p[ublica]tion, and mine is a mistaken zeal." The correspondence is printed in the second edition of Thornbury's "Life of Turner," p. 333. The spaces between brackets are there left blank, and here filled in by way of conjecture.

‡ Of the twelve plates which Mr. Ruskin denounces as "quite useless" to students of drawing, six belong to the E. P. class. [See "Elements of Drawing," p. 132 *n.*] I am not acquainted with any passage in which that great exponent of Turner's meaning professes to interpret the letters E. P.

"Effete," or perhaps "Engravers' Pastoral." In an "*Elegant Pastoral*," we should rather look for the artificial court fancies of poets and artists of the Watteau school; what the author* of "The Sketcher," called "the smoking, piping, cocked hat, and flowered shepherds of French crockery," the "very reverse," as he says, of his own ideal painter, Gaspar Poussin. In the *Liber Studiorum* the view of the sham temple of Isis, in Petworth Park, comes the nearest, perhaps, to this kind of fashionable elegance, but, even here, there are no figures or *fêtes champêtres*, the only living things being a small bird and a solitary peacock. It was a kind of sentimentality with which Turner had little or no sympathy.

* The Rev. John Eagles. The following passage from that thoughtful and agreeable, but now old-fashioned, writer on art, should on the other hand be quoted as an example of the use of the word "elegance," which seems to accord with its common acceptance in reference to the *Liber*. He remarks that, although in the landscapes of Claude there is "always a certain cast of elegance, and pastoral elegance, it is of an age long after the golden."

Mr. Ruskin uses the same epithet in relation to the sentiment of Claude's landscapes, in the following passage:—"Although he often introduces romantic incidents and mediæval as well as Greek or Roman personages, his landscape is always in the true sense classic—everything being 'elegantly' (selectingly or tastefully), not passionately, treated. The absence of indications of rural labour, of hedges, ditches, haystacks, ploughed fields, and the like; the frequent occurrence of ruins of temples, or masses of unruined palaces; and the graceful wildness of growth in his trees, are the principal sources of the 'elevated' character which so many persons feel in his scenery." ["Modern Painters," vol. 5, p. 250.]

Let us now examine the claims of John Pye's interpretation of E. P. as "Epic Pastoral."

It is by no means easy to define the meaning of this word "Epic." I do not find it mentioned in any dictionary as applied to painting. It is the epic poem alone which is dealt with by lexicographers, who usually treat the word "epic," as nearly synonymous with "heroic." In this sense, it clearly cannot be applied to Turner's pastorals. But it certainly was employed in relation to painting by artists early in the present century. Indeed Pye's own use of it is evidence in point. As late as the year 1832, an article on "Character and Expression in Epic Painting" appeared in the "Library of the Fine Arts" (vol. 4, p. 50), in which the term is treated throughout as one in recognized use. The writer's remarks, unfortunately, do not supply a definition of "epic painting," and he does not appear to have had the department of landscape under consideration. Another example, and an interesting one, of the employment of the word in question, occurs in a criticism of one of Turner's own pictures at the very time of his issue of the first numbers of the *Liber Studiorum*. In John Landseer's "Review" above quoted, the following remarks were made upon the great painter's "Battle of Trafalgar and Death of Nelson," exhibited at the British Institution in 1808, and now in the National Gallery,* which the

* This picture is not to be confounded with Turner's other "Battle of Trafalgar" at Greenwich Hospital, in which, however,

reviewer enthusiastically designates as "in every sense of the word, the *first* picture of the kind that has ever to our knowledge been exhibited."

"It might not, perhaps," he continues, "be improper, as this picture is new in its kind, to call it a *British epic picture*. It was the practice of Homer and the great epic poets in *their* pictures, to detail the exploits or sufferings of their heroes, and to generalize or suggest the rest of the battle, or other accompaniment; and Mr. Turner, in the picture before us, has detailed the death of his hero, while he has suggested the whole of a great naval victory; which we believe has never before been attempted, in a *single* picture. . . . While he has brought together all those leading *facts* which mark the battle of Trafalgar, and the death of our great and gallant Admiral, he has either painted or suggested all those circumstances of a great and dreadful sea-fight, which shall rouse the hearts of his countrymen to deeds of naval heroism, or melt them with pity."*

This kind of pictorial generalization to which the reviewer has here given the name of "epic," is one

Thornbury, using the same word, says, "Turner has, with *epical* grandeur, aggregated the events of several different hours." ["Life of Turner," second edition, p. 429.] Mr. Hamerton agrees with the earlier biographer in condemning the latter picture as inartistic, and in describing it as "always an intensely unpopular picture with sailors." ["Life of Turner," p. 120.] Mr. Ruskin gives a very high rank to both of these pictures. ["Notes on the Turner Gallery, 1856," 1st edition, p. 78.]

* "The Review of Publications in Art," p. 83.]

that Turner afterwards largely employed in the great development of topographic art of which he was the author. But I must confess myself unable to translate E. into "epic," in the sense in which the word is used in the passage just quoted. It may be contended, however, that the reviewer is confessedly applying the word to a new class of objects (to painting instead of poetry), rather than employing it in a recognized manner.

It is true that in neither of these cases is the term in question applied to landscape simply. That it was so used, instances enough may probably be found ; but it will suffice to cite the two following, as bearing on its supposed employment by Turner. A writer in 1831, in the "Library of the Fine Arts" (vol. 2, p. 277), without referring specifically to the *Liber Studiorum*, or its apportionment of subjects, but possibly having that work in his mind, proposes, as a classification of Landscape, the following divisions :—"Epic, Pastoral, Domestic, and Topographical ; together with Marine." Here, it will be observed, "Epic" is not made, as Turner makes E. P., a subdivision of "Pastoral," but is a distinctly separate class. And, comparing the whole system with Turner's, we have to find places in the above categories for the divisions which he calls "Historical," and "Architectural." It cannot, I think, be doubted, that "Epic" was meant by this writer to comprise the "Historical" landscape of Turner, and that "Topography" would include "Architecture ;" for there are no other of the heads under

which they could be included with propriety. Remembering also that the author of the *Liber* marks with an "H" scenes from poetic fiction as well as those from history proper, it is not easy to perceive what further kind of subject could be included under the name of "Epic."

So far it would seem that "Epic" and "Historical" landscape, if not the same thing, were very nearly identical,* being a kind of composition in which the natural elements commonly comprised under the name of "Landscape" were mainly used as a vehicle of expression of divine or human action of an elevated character. It is as clear, however, that if Turner put "E." for "Epic," he did not imply a use of the word in that sense. Such kind of composition he marks with an H. "Historical-Pastoral" was indeed named by Polonius, as within the dramatic repertory of the Danish players, and many a scene from Shakspeare might have suggested an effective landscape belonging to that category. But, except in the frequent introduction of ruins, which is not, as we have seen, peculiar to these subjects, and a few antique figures, there is little or none of the historic element in the class of plates marked E. P.

The second example above referred to of the use

* Mr. Ruskin, in the Introduction to his "Notes on his Drawings by the late J. M. W. Turner, R.A." calls the "Fifth Plague of Egypt," exhibited in 1800 (of which subject there is a plate in the *Liber*, marked "H.") Turner's "first sacred and epic picture."

of the word "epic," as applied to landscape, is, however, directly in point, and, as far as it goes, an exact parallel to that of the letter E. by Turner. It is contained in an admirable work by John Varley, entitled, "A Treatise on the Principles of Landscape Design;" a book of the old school, containing some very practical instruction of a kind now, as it seems to me, greatly undervalued by students and critics in art. The earlier numbers were published while the *Liber Studiorum* was in progress, and the third is illustrated by a plate, dated Aug. 25, 1816, executed in aquatint in imitation of the author's sepia drawings, by F. C. Lewis, the same engraver whom Turner first employed upon the *Liber*. The plate in question contains, one above the other, two landscape subjects, much in the style, and nearly of the size, of the *Liber* plates. The upper one is distinguished by the title "Epic," and the whole plate, comprising the two subjects, has, engraved under it, the general title "Pastoral." The full descriptions of the classes of composition illustrated by the two examples are, therefore, "Pastoral," and "Epic Pastoral."* It needs no more than a glance at these two compositions, purposely contrasted, as they are, upon a single page, to consign them, under Turner's

* In the accompanying letter-press "Epic" and "Pastoral" are, it is true, employed as headings, as if the words were meant to be opposed to each other; but there is no further indication of such intent, and their position on the plate can only be explained as above. *See the Frontispiece.*

nomenclature, to the respective classes indicated in the *Liber Studiorum* by the letters P. and E. P. respectively. The lower, or simply Pastoral subject, is an ordinary English rural scene, with untrimmed thicket, rugged roadside, and wooden fence. A flock of sheep are fording a stream, and two geese wander confidently through rank grass towards a gipsy camp. Under the branches of a dwarf tree, the eye is just allowed to peer out into the distance and perceive a village spire. The upper, or Epic Pastoral, shows us a park-like expanse, with shaven lawns and placid lake. Sheep and poets ruminate in common on the banks. In lieu of the gipsy-tent, a classic tomb reposes under tall and shapely trees. An Italian mansion, half hid by rounded foliage, rises majestically in the midst; and over these the eye is led to a greater range of distance, and a wider horizon. The general lines of the composition have a measured flow; the gradations are more subtile, the contrasts less abrupt, and the picturesque is exalted into the beautiful.

Varley's letter-press in explanation of the plate embraces a variety of useful hints, which apply to these in common with other designs, but he for the most part leaves it to the examples themselves to show the general distinctions between the two styles to which they belong.

One point of contrast, indeed, he specially notices, in relation to the two individual subjects; namely, that in the epic example the eye is directed towards the distance, while in the pastoral the attention is

more exclusively engaged with the nearer objects. In the former, "the distant landscape retiring by the mildness of the middle tint (which always produces space) receives," he says, "an agreeable contrast from the due proportion of shadow" in the foreground ; while, in the latter, the character of the sky "directs the eye to the greatest contrast of light in the lower portion of the picture, near to the principal lines and objects which contain the leading features of interest." The disposition of the incidents tends to the same result. In the first case "the two figures, turned toward the distance, direct the spectator's eye into the subject." In the second :—"As the sentiment and interest, from the nature of the composition, belong more to the foreground than to the distance, the sheep and figure are made to assist this sentiment, by their approach toward the spectator."

He further points out that in the epic subject the elevated position of the spectator is such, that, without producing the distortion of a bird's-eye view, it enables him to "perceive a flat line in the distance, over the buildings. This latter choice," he adds, "may be considered as one of the grandest expedients of several of the greatest masters, in composing landscapes ;" and he proceeds to cite some of the pictures of Nicolo Poussin, "representing the customs of the ancients, with figures sitting under trees, and against massy stone walls," as belonging to the "higher class of landscape." "This majestic style of art," he says, "frequently

requires a regularity in parts, which, to uninformed minds, often appear as so many formalities."

The writer then expatiates on the importance of balancing the lines of the composition, and employs the following curious illustration of his meaning:—"All the leading lines ascending and descending should so balance each other from the different sides of the picture, that a ball rolling down one of them, should be impelled up on the other side; and so on in succession, till it settled near the centre of the picture, on "a certain "level space," which the writer considered it "necessary to introduce in all subjects." "The want of this principle," he adds, "is manifest in a thousand works of landscape; and especially in sketches, and frequently gives the appearance of the picture being curtailed in its length, whenever the lines run out of the picture; and in all cases is far from being satisfactory to the eye of Taste."

Varley concludes what he calls the "explanation" of the "Epic" subject with some remarks on "classical designs of landscape, which exhibit the remains of towns and buildings."

With respect to these, he says, "it will add much to the decision and variety which are required, if, generally, the ruins of stone walls, or arches of bridges, accompany the representation of pools of water which are near to them; for, as our general associations of classic scenes require the introduction of buildings, and occasional straight forms and lines, there should be but few portions of

the picture without some fragment, especially near the foreground ; as the decision of light and shade which these things can sustain, when required, is equivalent to an additional strength of light and shade, and helps to throw back and soften the distance."

How much of what is here laid down applies to the style of landscape composition which Turner chose to distinguish by the letters E. P. will, I think, be apparent both in the foregoing remarks, and on an examination of the *Liber* plates. After a study and comparison of them with these two designs of Varley's, there remains scarcely a doubt in my own mind that Pye was using Turner's words when he called the style in question, "EPIC PASTORAL."

Before dismissing the subject, it may be well to recur for a moment to the consideration of the word "epic" in its ordinary use in relation to poetry ; in order to see if there can be any further analogy to the case of graphic art. The most intelligible account, to me, that I have found of the word, is that given in Brande and Cox's " Dictionary of Science, &c." " If a name," says the writer, " which has been loosely applied to poems differing widely from each other in many important features, admits of definition, an epic may be defined to be a poem which relates the history of some one event, or series of events which, apart from what precedes or follows them, may be regarded as a whole." Now it seems to me that this self-contained unity, this concentration of interest within the boundary-

line of the picture, which is clearly referred to in some of Varley's remarks above quoted, is a very distinctive characteristic of a kind of landscape, call it what we may, "classical," "ideal," "artificial," "elevated," or "epic," which aimed at something higher than mere "elegance," and was practised by Claude and the Poussins, and, to a great extent, by our own earlier landscape painters of the present century, such as Varley,* Barret, and Turner himself; something which is directly opposed to the fragmentary imitations of nature, copied with minute exactness, but without any composition "as a whole," that pass too often in the present day under the name of "landscapes." It is also a quality which forms a more important requisite, and is, I think, more sedulously cultivated in the E. P. than in the P. examples given by Turner of his "classification of styles" in the *Liber Studiorum*.

* On being asked by an eminent living landscape painter whether he had not a high opinion of Varley's drawings, Pye answered, "Yes, *as far as they go*;" meaning thereby, that Turner's principles were the same, but were carried by him to a much higher point of refinement and completeness.

CHAPTER III.

Style of Engraving—Mezzotint and Aquatint—Girtin's "Paris"—Experiments—Lewis's Plate "Bridge and Goats"—Turner's Letters—Technical Difficulties—Engraver's Charges—Turner his own Etcher—Mr. Rawlinson on Variations of Effect among Etchings—Mr. Haden's Theory—Evidence of Lupton.

ALTHOUGH the *Liber Studiorum* had been advertised as a work to be engraved in mezzotint (that being the process employed in the reproduction of Claude's studies in the *Liber Veritatis*), Turner did not consider himself bound to adopt that style of engraving, if he could meet with another that would better suit his purpose, and give more perfectly the effect of his own drawings. The capabilities of aquatint* for the imitation of drawings in bistre or sepia had been powerfully exhibited in the landscapes of Paul Sandby, and more recently in Girtin's last and greatest work, his series of views in Paris.† The method was at that time employed

* In *aquatint* engraving the shades are produced by means of acid, which corrodes the metal in the interstices of a granulated coating of resin; whereas a *mezzotint* plate is roughened with a tool, worked by the hand.

† Among Mr. Pye's papers, I find the following record of the end of Girtin's career. "From 1799, Girtin's illness (characterized by asthma) continued to increase and to enfeeble his exertions. At the Peace of Amiens (1802) he went to Paris, and by the aid of a *fiacre* (in which, while there, he usually sat) and

with great effect in numerous publications wherein the old stiff form of topographic illustration was gradually giving place to the higher treatment of landscape subjects which Turner and Girtin had already done much to develop. Turner, therefore, proceeded to make experiments, not only in Etching and Mezzotint, but in Aquatint also, with a view to the success of his project; and, among the persons whom he employed and consulted was Mr. John Girtin, the great Thomas Girtin's surviving brother, who had published the Paris views.* The follow-

his pencil, he recorded, in a number of sketches, the first impressions of his mind on seeing the great features of that remarkable city. On his return home he made for Lord Essex a series of twenty drawings from those sketches; projected a work to be engraved from them in aquatinto; etched in soft ground the outlines of the subjects of the work; and, in the full development of his genius, he sunk into the grave, November 1802, aged 27 years. The engraved work was entitled 'Views in Paris and its Environs,' by Thomas Girtin. It was published after the artist's death, by his brother. His wife reported that he continued to work to the last, and that the brush used to drop from his hand, from weakness." Turner was among those who sorrowfully followed "poor Tom," as he called him, to the grave.

"The breadth of Turner," writes Pye in one of his note-books, "is greater than that of Girtin. Energy of individuality in Girtin is generally greater than breadth. . . . In Turner, gradation was the governing power. In Girtin, gradation had its due influence, but the parts were the governing power. Turner's gradation commenced from the marginal line of the foreground of his work; in Girtin's works it did not begin till half way to the horizon, consequently it was not so complete as Turner's."

* The Messrs. Redgrave ("A Century of Painters," vol. 1, p. 400) call John Girtin a "writing engraver." On the title-page of the copy of the "Paris Views," in the Art Library at South Kensington, is pasted one of his address cards, of which the

ing letter* to this assistant in Turner's labours, "displays," says Pye, "to the engraver, one of the great principles by means of which the painter worked out his effects."

"Mr. Girtin: Sir,—Be so good as to clear the marginal lines, which are at present very bad, double in some places and the Etching over (them). If we succeed I should like to have them engraved like Mr. Daniell's.† Respecting the Strength, don't be fearful. Let me see how the sky can be made to clear out, like a grain of aquatinta; and then the rest in proportion. As long as you can maintain clearness, be not timid as to depth; regard only the gradation of the Shadows.

"You may be sure that I am rather anxious to see how the first answers, and therefore the sooner you can let me see a proof the more you will oblige

"Your obedient Servant,

"J. M. W. TURNER."

The result of these experiments appears to have

following is a copy :—"J. Girtin, 1, Little Newport Street, Gerrard Street, Soho. [Late Assistant Engraver at the Bank.] Engraver and Printer of Cards, Bills of Parcels, Notes, Arms, Crests & Cyphers, Fac-similies of Manuscripts, &c."

* "The original letter," writes Pye, "is in the possession of Mr. Anderton of Upper Grosvenor Street." It is here quoted from a copy in Pye's handwriting.

† Views in India, by Thomas and William Daniell, were at this time in course of publication. They were in aquatint; and to no subjects had that process been then applied with more neatness and delicacy of finish.

been such as to determine the painter to employ the aquatint process in the production of his *Liber*; for the first engraver to whom he applied to execute the plates was Mr. F. C. Lewis, a very eminent artist in that style of work, who engraved the greater number of Girtin's Paris views, and by whom the first plate of Turner's great work was actually put on the copper by the process in question. This plate does not stand first in the order of publication,* for, although the first number of the work was published in 1807, it only appeared in the ninth, which came out in April, 1812. The reason why it was thus held back will presently be understood.

It is the plate, unnamed by Turner, but variously described as "A Classical Composition" (Burlington Catalogue), "Sunset, Landscape, Building, Goats, &c." (Pye Collection), "Sunset after the manner of Claude" (Pye MS.), "Scene in Italy, with goats on a walled road, and trees above" (Ruskin), &c., but familiarly known by the name in Mr. Rawlinson's list, of "The Bridge and Goats." The original drawing, wherein the subject is reversed, is among those at the National Gallery. When Turner engaged Mr. Lewis to work for the *Liber*, it appears to have been arranged that the painter should etch the outline, and the engraver should add, in aquatint, an imitation of the original washes of bistre or sepia,

* It is numbered 43 in Mr. Rawlinson's catalogue, wherein the "Frontispiece," which came out a month later still, is marked "No. 1."

and receive five pounds for doing so. In this arrangement, Turner had before him the example of his late friend Tom Girtin, who had himself etched the outlines of the Paris views with such masterly effect. How far (if at all) or in what manner, the draughtsman and the engraver had worked together in that wonderful series of prints, I am unable to say ; but in Turner's case a practical difficulty arose in this intended division of labour. It appears from the following letter, that on etching the first plate, the great painter became dissatisfied with the order of proceeding ; and that, in the next, he proposed, if possible, to have the aquatint done first, and to put in the outline afterwards :—

“ Mr. LEWIS I could wish you of course to get forward with the Etched plate as soon as possible, only send me 12 *Etchings* before you aquatinta it I have likewise put another drawing with the plate, if you can get on with it without an Etching *do so* and I will Etch it afterward if you cannot send me another *prepared plate* when you send me the 12 Etchings and the drawing back and then I will get it Etched and send it to Salisbury St. Send to me at West End Upper Mall Hammersmith and if by the Boat from Hungerford there is more chance of care being taken of the Etched plate.—J. M. W. Turner.”

It seems, however, that Mr. Lewis was unable to comply with Turner's wish with respect to either of the two drawings. In etching his outline with an artist's freedom of touch, Turner had not, as I

imagine, been able to imitate his own drawing with the fidelity of a professed copyist; and it may well be that, feeling this to be the case, and that it would be impossible to preserve the spirit of his design, and at the same time secure sufficient accuracy for the purposes of the engraver, who was expected to produce a fac-simile of the drawing, he had proposed for the future to *finish* with etched lines, what the engraver should *begin* by putting in masses of light and shade. This feeling, if it existed, was not without foundation, for the nature of the painter's etching of this first subject was found to be such, that the engraver was obliged, for his guidance in the aquatinting, to request Turner to tint an impression of it for him with washes of colour (probably grey or brown). He also interposed technical objections to Turner's etching *over* his work on future plates. "I felt," he wrote long after to his friend Pye, "that there would be some very troublesome matters respecting Mr. Turner's etching on my plates afterwards; I feared damage of foul biting, which would cause endless trouble." This explains, I think, the meaning of the first expressions in the next letter, in which the painter proposes that the engraver shall etch the plate himself.

"SIR :—I have sent you an Etched outline tinted as you desired—but* you cannot proceed without my

* Words seem to be omitted in these two places; perhaps "as" or "if," and "I" or "you."

Etching being exactly similar to my Drawing it is of little use in my Etching them first—for* cannot follow line by line with the Drawing—therefore I wish you to Etch the one I now send and when you send it home send an Etching ground over yours with a proof print—then what etching is wanting I can then add—I think this will be the best way, for to touch up an etching† is full as much trouble to me as making the drawing, so pray get this done immediately.

“J. M. W. TURNER.

“WEST END, UPPER MALL,

“HAMMERSMITH.

“The new one is a view of Chepstow therefore *must not be Reversed* but made like the drawing.”‡

* See Note, p. 51.

† A very interesting example of Turner's thus “touching up an etching” to save himself the “trouble of making a drawing” was sold, in Mr. Heugh's collection, at Christie's, in April, 1878. It was executed for the subject known as “Windmill and Lock,” which was originally painted in oil. Mr. Rawlinson states that he knows of no other drawing of that subject.

‡ The meaning of this postscript is, that “Chepstow,” being a real place, must be represented in the print as it stands in nature. It would therefore have to be reversed on the copper plate. The “Bridge and Goats,” on the other hand, being a fancy composition, did equally well either way, and the lines of the original drawing had therefore been copied on the plate as they were, the result being that the print of that subject is the reverse of the drawing.

“Chepstow” may either be the subject called “River Wye,” engraved by Annis, which was published in 1812, and stands No. 48 in Mr. Rawlinson's list, or that which Pye names “Chepstow Castle. Junction of the Wye and Severn,” No. 28,

Lewis had no objection to undertake the etching, but considered the sum of five guineas, which was all that Turner would consent to pay for the plate, etching included, a remuneration too far from adequate to the time it would employ. "At that time," he writes to Pye in 1850, "I was busied in engraving fac-similes of the fine works of Claude, Raffaele, Michael Angelo and other Masters of the Royal Collection, but had Mr. Turner etched them [the *Liber* plates] for me I certainly would not have hesitated and would have gladly done them for the low sum that he offered when he first came to [me] about the work. . . . I ought not," he adds, "to have considered the price of the plates any object compared to the fame for such fine works." "The reason," he says, in a letter to Pye dated 1852,

published 1811. Whichever it be, the above letter implies that it was selected by Turner for an earlier place in the series.

Mr. Rawlinson prints this letter from a copy in the British Museum; made, as he believes, by Pye, or more probably, I think, by Lewis. An inspection of the original letter (recently in the possession of F. C. Lewis's son, Mr. C. G. Lewis, and afterwards, if not now, in that of the last-named artist's nephew, Mr. J. Hardwick Lewis) would show that before "Chepstow" in the postscript there is the word "Dumblane," which Turner appears to have written in error, and then smeared with his finger to obliterate it, "Chepstow" being written after it by way of substitution. This, coupled with the fact that Lewis, in the letter to Pye, quoted below, distinctly states that Turner sent him "two other" drawings to etch, besides the plate he engraved, seems to show that "Dumblain," engraved by Lupton, No. 56, and published in 1816, was also one of the earliest subjects chosen by the artist. The interesting letter in question, though undated, is written on paper which bears the maker's water-mark—"1806."

now at the British Museum, and also printed by Mr. Rawlinson, "I declined engraving Mr. Turner's *Liber Studiorum* work, was on account of my great engagement with Mr. Chamberlain for whom I engraved the collection of Claude drawings of the Royal Collection. I only engraved one plate for Mr. Turner and which was etched by himself and he requested me to go on and sent me two other drawings and said I must etch them myself. I replied that the charge would be eight guineas. He said 'No, I will give no more.' . . . The charge for those plates should be fifteen guineas. I was paid for the Claudes fifteen, twenty, thirty, and forty guineas according to the size of the plates."

The following is the letter of Turner's which closed the transaction—:

"SIR :—I received the Proof of Drawing the Proof I like very well but do not think the grain is so fine as those you showed me for Mr. Chamberlain;* the effect of the Drawing is well preserved but as you wish to raise the Price to eight guineas, I must decline having the other Drawing engraved therefore send it when you send the plates when they have arrived safe the five guineas shall be left

* "The work here alluded to," writes Pye, "is 'Original designs of the most celebrated masters of foreign schools of Art,' by J. Chamberlain, Keeper of the King's Medals and Drawings, 1812. The subjects engraved by F. C. Lewis are in aquatinta."

in Salisbury Street where you'll be so good as to leave a receipt for the same.

"Yours, &c.,

"J. M. W. TURNER.

"14th Dec., 1807, HAMMERSMITH."

Thus ended the transaction with Lewis; and afterwards Turner nearly always etched the plates himself, the light and shade being added by a mezzotint engraver.

If my interpretation of the first of the above letters be correct, as to Turner's difficulty in keeping his etched outline sufficiently close to the drawing for the purposes of his engraver, Lewis, the question suggests itself: "How did he subsequently overcome this difficulty in his relations with his other engravers?" For the elucidation of this point, Mr. Rawlinson's volume furnishes some valuable facts and observations. After each etching was finished, and before the mezzotint work was added, several impressions were taken from the plates. These proofs were not sold by Turner, but came into the market after his death, and are much prized by connoisseurs. An examination of the whole set shows that although professing, in all but a very few cases, to be the work of Turner himself, the etchings are so varied in effect as to have even raised considerable doubts in Mr. Rawlinson's mind, whether some of them were from Turner's hand at all. On these doubts being laid before Mr. Seymour Haden, that eminent artist was enabled, by his

practical knowledge of the technical processes of etching, to explain to a great extent, what had thus seemed a mystery. Turner, as we have seen, was desirous of being relieved of the mechanical part of the reproduction of his designs ; and it is also shown by some penciled instructions in the painter's writing, which have been found on two of the impressions in Mr. J. E. Taylor's collection, that the engraver was employed to make some alterations in or additions to the etched lines. Mr. Haden's theory is, that although the lines were really scratched by Turner with the etching point on the resinous ground, the "biting in" of these lines upon the plate (*i.e.*, the application of the acid which furrowed them out on the copper) was the work of the professional engraver. This is a process, the uncertainty of which, as every etcher knows, admits of wide divergencies, which it is the province of the artist to control, by the exercise of his judgment and skill. Different artists having, as it is known, been employed in the engraving of different plates, Mr. Haden sees "no reason whatever to doubt," not only that Turner made, in the above manner, the drawing on the plate, and superintended the biting and correction, but that "the apparent difference of handling in the prefatory Etchings depends upon the biting, erasures, additions, and corrections which the plate has received in the course of its passage towards completion."

This theory also explains another remarkable fact which Mr. Rawlinson had observed and been

unable to account for. He found, in the complete works of William Say, formed by that engraver himself, and presented by his son to the British Museum, not only proofs of the etchings of all the *Liber* subjects which were mezzotinted by him, but also a proof of the *etching* of "*Æsacus and Hesperie*," one of the *Liber* plates which had always been supposed to be, throughout, the work of Turner himself. At the same time he noticed, on the margins of some of these proofs, the words in pencil, "*Aquafortis by W. Say.*" This expression, although, as Mr. Rawlinson tells us, "frequently used to denote the etcher of a plate," may, in these instances, signify no more than that the acid was applied by the last-named engraver.

As an expert in these matters, there can be no higher authority than Mr. Haden ; and we may well rest satisfied with his account of the transaction, as far as it goes. But it does not explain how Turner got over the objection which, if I rightly interpret his letters to Lewis, he had to drawing for himself upon the prepared plate the lines of the etching. Some light, however, is thrown upon this point by the written evidence of one of the engravers of the *Liber*, which I find among Mr. Pye's papers. In a letter* to him from Lupton, the following passage occurs. After mentioning his own dealings with Turner in relation to the first plate which he executed for the *Liber*, and the inadequate price paid,

* See p. 65.

Lupton adds by way of postscript :—" N.B. I have forgot the beginning. The engraver had also to lay the etching ground and trace the subject on the plate for the painter to etch, which was his uniform practice.—T. L."

This tracing of the subject by the engraver seems to supply the missing link in the course of proceeding. The practice accords with Mr. Haden's theory that the more technical parts of the process were habitually left by Turner to the professional craftsmen ; and a traced outline would enable the painter to wield the etching-tool freely, and withal retain sufficient fidelity to the drawing to satisfy the requirements of the copier in mezzotint. At the same time it is to be observed that Lupton omits to name among the functions assigned by Turner to his engravers, the important one of " biting in ;" and this in some degree counteracts the weight of Mr. Haden's evidence. But as what Lupton *did* say was an afterthought, he having " forgot the beginning " of the process ; he may possibly have " forgot " the end also.

CHAPTER IV.

Other Engravers of the *Liber*—Charles Turner—His Quarrel with Turner, R.A.—Its Causes—The Painter's Payments in Kind—Insufficient Remuneration to Engravers—Lupton—His First Plate—Clint's Experience—Turner's own Work on the Plates—Manufacture of Proofs—Various States—Pye's Opinion.

AFTER the severance, under the above circumstances, of Lewis's connection with Turner's great work, the author employed his namesake, Charles Turner, to engrave the designs, which were thenceforth, with a few partial exceptions, finished in mezzotint, on the framework of lines etched by the painter himself. Lewis's plate, as I have said, was not issued until long after; and Charles Turner engraved and also published the first twenty plates of the *Liber*. A difference then arose between the two Turners, which caused an estrangement of many years' duration, and the substitution of several other engravers. Mr. Rawlinson states the belief, which is correct, that Charles Turner required an advance from eight guineas, which he had hitherto received, to ten guineas, per plate; and that this the painter declined to grant. There is no doubt that the engagement did not end amicably, though all the circumstances of the quarrel are not generally known. On this matter some further evidence is afforded by the papers of Mr. Pye.

"I had the pleasure," writes C. Turner to Pye, in 1852, "to engrave* twenty-five of the plates, for eight guineas each, but finding I could not do justice to myself, I solicited two guineas more, which he would not grant, and a misunderstanding was the consequence which lasted nineteen years. The Windsor was then begun but has never been published in the work."

Pye's memoranda contain also the following note, apparently of a conversation on the same subject. "Mr. Charles Turner reports that having had more extra trouble with one of the plates for the *Liber Studiorum* than with any that he had previously engraved, and for which he received eight guineas each, he remarked that fact to J. M. W. Turner, and intimated that he ought to have twelve guineas instead of eight for it. The great painter made no reply, but the conversation continued on other subjects. Presently Mr. C. Turner said, 'Shall I charge twelve guineas in my account for the plate?' No answer was made. The conversation however continued. Presently the great painter left, without noticing the proposition submitted to him. Finally he declined to pay the extra charge, and consequently the two Turners did not speak to each other for (nineteen) years."

That this, however, was not the only event which led to the estrangement appears from the following further account, also given by Mr. Pye:—

* This includes three plates published after a reconciliation had been effected, and two unpublished plates.

“Mr. C. Turner told me that previously to the publication of the fourth number the great man called upon him in a very bad humour, and said :

“ ‘ This is a pretty business, why I find that some of the *Liber* prints have been stolen.’

“ *Mr. Charles Turner.*—‘ Well ! do you suppose I stole them ?’

“ ‘ I don’t say who stole them !’

“ *Mr. C. T.*—‘ How do you know that some of them have been stolen ?’

“ ‘ Why because many proofs are about that have never been published. I have seen some of them for sale without needle holes in their margins ; which could not be if they had not been stolen.’

“ ‘ This affair (continued Mr. C. Turner) made a quarrel between us that lasted many years.’ ”

The sequel is related by John Pye, under his own signature, thus :—

“ The great painter having threatened with an action the dealer in whose shop-window the proofs had been exposed for sale, he brought forward a woman of whom he had bought them. She proved to be the person the great painter employed to stitch together the prints of the *Liber* in numbers. This person declared that the prints she had sold were her own, for that Mr. Turner had given them to her instead of money, when she pressed him for the amount due to her for the labour she had performed, and that she sold them to enable herself to get bread.”

This was not, the only occasion on which Turner

is said to have given away valuable *Liber* proofs, to avoid parting with money. The following anecdote, in one of Pye's note-books, affords another example :—

“ Mr. Colnaghi sold a very curiously interesting series of the frontispiece of the *Liber Studiorum* now in the possession of Mr. Stokes ; *i.e.*, the drawing and proofs of that plate in its progress, and of the changes through which the effect of the centre subject of Europa went in consequence of the wear of the plate. Soon after the death of Turner I remarked to Mr. D. Colnaghi on the fact of his having purchased and sold this series of curiosities, and on the presumptive evidence there was of their having been stolen from Mr. Turner ; to which Mr. Colnaghi replied : ‘ You are very much mistaken in that matter. The person of whom I bought them, a book-binder, received them from Mr. Turner in discharge of a debt, in lieu of money ! ’ ”

The following extract from one of Pye's note-books, gives his version of a story in point, which, I believe, was first related in print by Mr. Alaric A. Watts. “ The father of Mr. Fawkes's porter having died, he (the porter) left Mr. Fawkes to conduct the business of the village inn, that had been held by his father. Some time after he sought an interview with Mr. Fawkes, with the hope of obtaining for himself the chair in which he had sat and slept many an hour in Farnley Hall. Having expressed to Mr. Fawkes his desire, he said he

should be happy to pay for the chair, which he valued at about £3, and that he could settle for it in a way that he thought would be agreeable. He then proceeded to state that Mr. Turner, when staying at Farnley, used to drop in at his father's house occasionally and take a glass of brandy-and-water; that in course of time he had run up a score, which amounted to about £3; which he paid by giving as a set-off* to the landlord, one of the Yorkshire drawings, a little town. Now the price of the chair being about £3, and the bill being £3, the drawing was offered and accepted as being the full value of the chair."

The loss of such skilful collaborators as F. C. Lewis and C. Turner does not seem to have affected the painter's habit of screwing down his engravers to the lowest possible scale of remuneration for their work. Of this, Pye's experience as a collector brought the following examples under his notice.

"During several years," he writes, "I sought in vain to obtain proofs of the plates engraved by Mr. Lupton for the *Liber*. That gentleman assured me that he could neither supply me with them nor refer me to any of his friends who were possessed of them. On my expressing to him my surprise at his statement, he replied: 'The fact is, Pye, the remuneration I obtained for engraving those plates did not enable me to pay for printing unnecessary proofs of them!'"

"For each of Mr. Lupton's four plates," continues

* *Sic*:—"an equivalent" is probably meant.

Pye, "he received five guineas. It was not until 1852 that I was enabled to obtain a proof of 'Ben Arthur.' For that I paid five guineas, *i.e.*, exactly the price he received for engraving the plate." Since that date the rise in the *Liber* market has afforded examples in which the engraver's pay has been far surpassed by the sums given for single impressions.

The following interesting letter, hitherto unpublished, from Lupton to Pye, narrates the circumstances of that engraver's first professional connection with Turner, of whose works he was destined to become one of the most frequent and successful interpreters, in the mezzotint style :—

"4, KEPPEL STREET,

"RUSSELL SQUARE,

"Oct. 1848.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"At your request, I send you the following account of my *first* engraving. It was for the immortal Turner. Upon my completing my apprenticeship with my much valued friend and master, Clint, I frequently waited upon Turner with proofs of the *Liber Studiorum* plates (in progress). This introduction enabled me to solicit for myself a subject to engrave, to which solicitation he replied : 'How do I know what you can do?' 'Nor do I myself know, unless you try me,' I said; 'but if you will favour me with a subject, and don't like the engraving when done, we will destroy it.' He good-naturedly said, 'Well, tell me what I am to

pay you.' Now, recollecting that my old master's price for a plate was only six guineas, I thought it prudent to say five. He immediately put into my hands a slight but beautiful drawing in bistre of Solway Moss. I anxiously laboured at my plate. It was done, and, with the painter's aid, successfully done; and placed me at once among my brother scrapers, an artist.

"My aspirations were so far satisfied, if not my pocket. The pounds, shillings, and pence of the affair ran thus. Copper plate, 7s. 6d., mezzotint ground, 15s. My own labour, seven or eight weeks. As to provings, innumerable, resulting from the difficulty of obtaining an agreeable colour as nearly approaching to that of the drawing as possible; consequently the proving was not only difficult but expensive, even to the amount of two or three shillings each time.

"Yours, my dear Sir, very faithfully,

"John Pye, Esq."

"THOMAS LUPTON.

Here follows the postscript quoted above.*

The evidence of one more of Turner's engravers as to the painter's hard dealing, is given in the following letter:—

"PECKHAM,

"Oct. 5, 1850.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"In accordance with your wishes regarding the *Liber Studiorum*, I find my memory not very exact.

I cannot now say whether I received five guineas for each plate, or six ; but my pupil, Mr. Thomas Lupton, whose memory I hold to be better than my own, thinks I had the latter sum. I know that I gave the plates up on account of the inadequacy of the price.

“ Yours very sincerely,

“ John Pye, Esq.”

“ GEORGE CLINT.

Eleven of the published plates of the *Liber Studiorum* are the work of Turner's own hand, from first to last ; unless, indeed, the biting-in of the outlines was, in these, as well as in other cases, entrusted to a professional engraver. But this was very far from being the only share which the great artist himself took in preparing the metal for the transmission of his designs to paper. Not only were all the plates engraved, when not actually by him, at least under his own immediate and careful superintendence, but he undertook the task of repairing them when they became worn. His course of proceeding in this “restoration” of the plates (to use an expression employed in a somewhat similar sense by church architects) is a matter of notoriety ; but the following concise account of those transactions, from the pen of John Pye, is worth preserving. It is partly extracted from his private memoranda, and partly from the MS. notes which accompany the collection that he sold to the British Museum :—

“ The class of Landscape to which the subjects

respectively belong is denoted by the capital letter, or letters, on the upper part of the margin of each plate. These letters, in the early published parts of the work, also distinguish *proof* from *print* impressions. They are merely outlined in proofs. In prints, a different, though varying, character is imparted to them. They are not always the same. Some of them are black, some tinted ; whilst others are only distinguishable owing to one of the mere outlines used for proofs having been rendered stronger than the rest. . . . When some twenty proofs had been printed, the open letters were thus made black or otherwise so changed as to enable the amateur collector to distinguish proofs from print impressions.

“ On the publication of the first twenty plates in four parts, the conducting of the work,” which had hitherto been engraved and published by his namesake, Charles Turner, “ passed into the hands of the great painter himself. He himself repaired the plates, had the writing on the margin indicative of print impressions cleared off and replaced by writing indicative of proofs, and reissued to the public proof impressions of the subjects in their repaired state, at an advance of price. The work the great painter continued to publish himself ; he repaired the plates again and again, but he never again reinserted on the margins of the plates the letters which were necessary to enable the public to distinguish proof from print impressions ; for each of the impressions printed after the publication of

the fourth part proclaimed itself, by its marginal letter, to be a proof. . . .

“All the changes of effects made in the subjects of the plates during their wear under the printer’s hand were produced by Turner himself. Hence each act of repair or regeneration, instead of bringing the subject back to its original state, presents it to the view endowed with new features of effect . . . but, the etched outlines of the subjects never having been worn by the printer’s hand, the effects of *chiaroscuro* in which they were clothed alone claimed his attention.” The “rapidity of wear in the *Liber* plates, and the consequent necessity for frequent reparations to enable them to produce a moderate number of impressions, explain at once how it comes to pass that there are, of each subject, so great a variety of qualities of impression. Turner himself superintended the printing of the plates, and made with his own hand all the required reparations. In so doing he rarely aimed at restoring the effect of a subject to its original state; on the contrary, he generally displayed his profound knowledge of *clair-obscur* and inventive power, by rendering the old engraved work applicable to the production of a new effect. The plate called the ‘Calm,’ and the ‘Inverary Pier,’ are remarkable evidences of this power. It* presents to view each of those subjects in four† different effects! . . .

* The Pye collection, apparently.

† Mr. Rawlinson mentions five states of the “Inverary Pier.” The print-room at the British Museum has at least six

Turner," observes Pye, in the MS. at the British Museum, "evidently regarded each plate in its regenerated state as a new work." But the honest old engraver's opinion of the painter's conduct in these transactions appears more clearly in the following passage from his private memoranda:—"This withdrawal from the public of the means of distinguishing one class of impressions from another, by investing the bad with the mark that had in all times of engraving belonged only to the good, is one of the many remarkable features of this work, and perhaps the least creditable of any of them to the morality of the author."

varieties of impressions, a careful and intelligent comparison of which would reveal much, to a thoughtful student of landscape composition, of the artistic skill which enabled the painter to exercise an absolute control over the treatment of his subject; to guide the eye where he pleased, to attune, with the utmost precision, and to restore by the simplest means, the general harmony of the light and shade. A little consideration will discover a final cause for every added point of black or white, whatever concrete form it may assume;—be it bird, or sail, or broken anchor, or but a ripple on the surface of the loch.

CHAPTER V.

Turner as a Publisher—Mixture of Proofs and Prints—Rapid Wear in Printing—Mismanagement—Trade Discount—Print Market—Sale of Proofs by Colnaghi—Charles Turner's Stock—Mr. Griffith's—Rise in Price—Evidence of Printsellers—Lahee's Set of Proofs—Sale of Turner's Stock by the Court of Chancery—Future Prospect.

THE great diversity which thus arose among the impressions from each of the various plates of the *Liber Studiorum* opened a wide field for the investigation of the curious. But there was another circumstance which tended still further to confuse the amateur. This was the mode in which Turner was in the habit of arranging and issuing the impressions.

Turner charged double for what he called proof copies. To a difference in price "no reasonable objection," says Pye, "can be raised ; neither can it be objected that the price of proofs was double that of prints. But then, those who had paid for proofs" were entitled to "good impressions of the plates in their early states. Now it appears to me very doubtful," he adds, "whether, among all the copies of the work issued between 1818 (the time when the publication was discontinued and became a volume) till Turner's death (1851) a proof

copy will ever be found. All the copies I have heard of, and all that I have seen, for which proof prices have been paid (twenty-eight guineas) are apparently indiscriminate mixtures of proofs and prints, good and bad."

To obtain an entire set of proofs from the plates in their original and perfect states, as they were, that is to say, when Turner first regarded each as complete, thus became a task of considerable difficulty; the more so because the number of good impressions from every plate was necessarily extremely limited. For "the plates of the *Liber*," says Pye, "are copper (engraving on steel was not practised in England at the time that the work was being published). The *Liber* plates," he adds, "having been worn out and repaired again and again, a question arose as to the number of good impressions to be looked for of the plates in their first states. To settle that question" Pye obtained, in the year 1852, certificates from the only two of the engravers of the work who then survived, namely Charles Turner and Lupton, and from Mr. Lahee, who printed the plates during many years.* These three authorities concurred in declaring that not more than an average of thirty proofs of a fine class could be taken from each plate. After these had been

* Lahee was not, however, the only printer employed. Mr. M'Queen, the eminent plate printer of 184, Tottenham Court Road, states, in a letter of March 18, 1852, in answer to an inquiry of Pye's, that he printed for Turner fifteen sets of the *Liber Studiorum* in June 1845.

printed, the plates lost their power. When Pye sold his *Liber* collection to the British Museum, he placed with it the original document containing these certificates, and it is printed in an appendix to Mr. Rawlinson's volume.

Mr. Lahee prudently retained for himself as a trade perquisite a set of proofs, which he sold to Lupton after Turner's death. "At this time, the *Liber*," writes Pye, "had been published upwards of thirty years, and copies of it were in the hands of many artists and amateurs; yet, notwithstanding, the printer's proof copy in question was the only one known presenting to view a series of tolerably good proof impressions of the plates in their perfect states; while each of the copies that had been purchased of Turner himself (in consequence of circumstances elsewhere explained) was, without exception, whether it was said to be of proofs or prints, a mixture of a few good and many bad impressions from plates more or less worn by the printer's hand, till they had produced mere ghosts of what they had been, and consequently in the print market the value of such copies was very little."

Mr. Rawlinson chiefly attributes the pecuniary failure of the *Liber Studiorum* to a want of public appreciation of the landscape art of Turner. The modern taste for representations of natural scenery and real objects, as opposed to the ideal and so-called "classical" landscape of Claude, Poussin, and Salvator Rosa, had not arisen. The "Epic" was still preferred to the simple "Pastoral;" but the "E. P."

element was not strong enough to leaven the series. There was, however, another cause which operated against it. "The terms of publication," says Pye, "were unfavourable to its success, for it was published by the great painter himself,* who required to be paid for each part ready money; and besides, the allowance he made to print-sellers for dealing in it was so much under that which they required, that the *Liber Studiorum* was never fairly placed before the world."

The following interesting letter from Mr. Colnaghi, obtained evidently by Pye for the purpose of his intended memoir of Turner, shows the style in which the painter conducted this business :—

"PALL MALL EAST,

"July 30, 1852.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I must begin my note to you, in answer to yours, by an apology for not having sooner attended to your wish; but business, and want of an *occasional* opportunity, must plead my excuse.

"The first *Liber Studiorum* transaction our house had with the late great artist, J. M. W. Turner, was to pay ready money for any of the work we might wish to have, for which he allowed us a discount of 20 per cent. Two or three years afterwards he diminished the allowance to 10 per cent.

* Before the breach with Charles Turner it was published in the name of that engraver.

“About four years since, I received an order for a set of the work. As usual, I sent to his house for it with the money. He was not in London; but his housekeeper furnished my messenger with a copy, but had received orders from her master not to allow more than 5 per cent. The money (£14) was of course paid, and I thought no more about the transaction. But, some five or six weeks after, I received a visit from Mr. Turner, and in his rather uncourteous manner he said, ‘You owe me fourteen shillings.’ ‘I was not aware of being indebted to you,’ said I. He explained that before he left town, he had made up his mind not to make any allowance to the trade on sales. He acknowledged that he was not quite certain of having mentioned this determination of his to his housekeeper, but still he thought I owed him the money. I then took some silver out of my pocket, and, offering it to him, I said, ‘If you really think I owe you the money, take it;’ which he felt very much inclined to do, but I suppose an unusual fit of liberality came across him, and he said, ‘No, not this time, but, recollect, in future, no discount to the trade.’ ‘But,’ said I, ‘in that case how are we to live?’ ‘That’s no affair of mine,’ said he. Upon which we shook hands and parted. This was the last transaction I ever had with him, and the last time I ever saw him.

“Believe me, my dear Sir,

“Most faithfully yours,

“D. COLNAGHI.

“John Pye, Esq.”

The above letter I find stitched in a cover indorsed, in Pye's writing, "Evidence of Turner's eccentricities, and his love of money." The events there narrated occurred, it will have been seen, but three years before the painter's death, at a time when the work in question had begun to be sought for, and good impressions of its plates to be treasured up by print collectors. In its earlier days, after the publication ceased in 1819, until about the year 1840, the sale had been so limited and private, and the work so little cared about, that it had never been offered for sale in the windows of print-sellers, neither had they kept it in stock.

"From 1840 to 1851," continues Pye, "Turner's reputation and the price of the *Liber* rose in proportion. Copies of it were sold occasionally by auction, and dealers were mostly the highest bidders.* The frequency of enquiries made in the print trade by artists for good impressions of favourite subjects of the work, and by others, possessed of copies of it, who desired to get rid of all bad impressions and supply their places with good ones, tempted the

* "Mr. Halstead," says Pye, "was at this time the greatest buyer. He began to deal in Turner's prints in 1833; sought engravers' proofs; sold at that time engravers' proofs of the *Liber* at 7s. 6d. each, and a few years [afterwards] repurchased many of them at a guinea and a half each. Bought at Christie's Mr. Say's proofs of the plates he engraved for the *Liber* at 1s. 6d. each, and sold some of the unpublished ones at a guinea and a half. Bought by auction thirteen numbers for 9 guineas; but previously the price was so low that he bought an entire set of the fourteen numbers for £3."

print dealers to look to the chances of auctions for the means of supplying the demand. The copies thus brought into the market were immediately broken up, and each print priced according to its popularity, or the goodness of its impression. By this trade in single prints, many stray proofs of great brilliancy (and occasionally an unlettered one) have been acquired by the artist and *amateur* collector."

But it was impossible to obtain a perfect set of impressions except by the following process :—" By reason of the intermixture of good and bad impressions in all copies, the only known means of acquiring a good proof copy of the *Liber* formerly was to buy up a large number of the defective copies and make a selection from the total number bought. This mode of proceeding had not, however, been adopted when Turner died." It was not until that event, thirty-two years after the publication of the last part of the *Liber*, that emulation was raised among collectors, and a keen traffic in proofs set in. As yet the work "had excited little interest beyond that of the community of British artists." To the many the plates were known only in their "deteriorated state, disguised by second-hand dresses made for them by the author as often as those with which he had originally invested them began to fade."

At Turner's death, as has been above stated, the set of proofs retained by Lahee, the printer, formed the only known copy of the work in its original and perfect state. "This collection," says Pye, "had

probably neither been seen nor heard of till the sale to Mr. Lupton. It did not, however, long continue to enjoy among collectors of Turner's works the reputation of being unique. . . . Soon* after Turner's death, a great number of fine impressions of some forty-five or more of the plates of the *Liber*, unlettered and lettered, were on sale by Messrs. D. Colnaghi and Co. They had been lying by entirely unknown to amateurs of art, and now came forth with all their original freshness and with acquired mellowness of tone, displaying the charms with which the genius of the painter originally invested the plates from which they were printed. Amateurs acknowledged the seductiveness of their charms, and almost immediately they were dispersed at prices without example in sales of modern engraved works.

"This property Messrs. Colnaghi obtained from Mr. C. Turner, and from Mr. T. Griffith," of Norwood. Charles Turner was, as we know, the engraver of a large number of the *Liber* plates; and Mr. Griffith "had been from 1840 agent to the great painter for the sale of his pictures." The market thus opened "astonished the art amateurs."

Charles Turner's collection was reported to comprise "all his proof impressions of the first twenty plates engraved by him for the *Liber Studiorum*, and also all the proofs of his plates for that work on which the great man had, during their progress, touched." These Messrs. Colnaghi had bought for upwards of £900. Of this amount £600 were paid

* In January 1852. Turner died December 19, 1851.

for Charles Turner's stock of proofs of his finished plates, and £300 for those of the unfinished plates touched by his great namesake. The £600 worth of finished proofs had been valued by C. Turner, one with another, at £1 10s. each. They "were sold by Messrs. Colnaghi and Co., at from two guineas to four and five guineas each.* Hence," says Pye, "it may be presumed that Messrs. Colnaghi and Co. gained £600 profit, making the real money realized by these proofs £1,200. The estimated value of each one of the lot of touched proofs . . . purchased for £300, I have never heard. But as they were sold at prices varying from £10 to £15, it may be presumed that they realized a profit of £300, making the real money value of this lot of touched proofs £600. Hence it appears that the proofs sold by Mr. C. Turner to Messrs. Colnaghi and Co. of the plates he engraved for the *Liber*, touched and untouched, realized, when sold in detail to amateurs and collectors, £1,800!!"

"Mr. Charles Turner told me," says Pye, "that he had at one time so many proofs of the plates in different states that he gave them to the servants to

* In the sale at Christie and Co.'s, May 1, 1878, of Mr. Heugh's collection, were about twenty-five proofs, each with an etching, from that of Charles Turner; certified by a memorandum by Lahee, the printer, and also by a note by Charles Turner (by whom they were also signed), to the effect that they were among the first twenty or thirty impressions, after which the bloom began to be lost. These were sold at prices varying from five guineas to £23 per lot, or an average of about £10. Many were bought by Messrs. Colnaghi and Co.

light the fire with, and that he little thought at that time of the robbery he was committing on his children, through his ignorance of the real value of what he gave to be burnt . . . 'How unconscious was I while so doing,' he ejaculated, 'that I was robbing my children of a fortune!' He continued, 'Why, a few days after I had sold to Colnaghi my proofs, and thought I had done well, a gentleman called at my house and enquired of me whether I had any proofs of my plates engraved after the great man, finished or unfinished. But, to my regret, I found that Colnaghi had cleared me out, with the exception of one; and that one was the first ever printed from my plate of the wreck, which had been to me till then more worthless than blank paper, because I could make no use of it. This I produced without any expectation of selling it. But my visitor was so delighted at seeing it that I asked him twenty guineas for it; and in exchange I received from him a cheque on his banker for that sum.'"

How Charles Turner became possessed of so large a number of proofs of the finished plates, "he accounted for," says Pye, "by the following interesting anecdote, which he related to me, as well as to many other persons :—

"'While I was engraving the plates of the *Liber*, said he, 'the great man often called upon me When my first plate was finished, and I showed my great namesake a proof of it, he said, "I like this, Charley, you must get me a dozen proofs of it"' Several times he said, "Charley, I should like to

have a dozen proofs of that plate." Of course I got the proofs, and paid for them, and also the like number of all the other plates which I engraved for the work.* But, some years afterwards, when I quarreled with him, I asked him for the money that I had paid for the printing of the proofs. He said, "I shan't pay you, for I never ordered 'em." So they remained in my hands. So, as they were in my possession at the time of his death, and I had been lying out of the money, I paid myself for printing them, after more than thirty years, by selling them to Colnaghi.'"

"Mr. Charles Turner," continues Pye, "engraved of the seventy-one plates comprised in the *Liber Studiorum*, published by J. M. W. Turner, twenty-three, for each of which he received eight guineas, making somewhat less than £200 for the whole number. For the proofs of these plates the foregoing narrative is evidence that he received £900. Hence it appears that he acquired a tolerably remunerative interest for having paid for the printing of twelve impressions of each plate that he himself had engraved."

Mr. Griffith's collection of proofs, which came into the market at the same time, was even more interesting. Pye describes the contents of a portfolio, which that gentleman exhibited to him at Norwood, in May, 1852, as "some sixty (mostly unlettered) proofs of Turner's *Liber* plates, of

* It will be remembered that Charles Turner was at this time the publisher as well as the engraver of the work.

which a large number were from plates engraved for the work by Turner himself; and also duplicates and triplicates of the subjects, lettered or unlettered, and some of them from plates in their progressive states, such as I had neither seen nor heard of; and all these, notwithstanding that they were upwards of thirty years old, were in as good a state as they would have been had they never been touched after they left the printer's hand I knew that occasionally a stray engraver's proof, besides those sold at Mr. Say's sale, had been met with, but here I saw a collection of unlettered as well as lettered proofs; and I knew well that the lettered had never been published." Pye relates that Mr. Griffith informed him that he had, many years previously, purchased these treasures at an obscure shop in Soho, for two shillings and two-shillings-and-sixpence each. How they came into the possession of this mysterious printseller it is probably useless to inquire.

"Of the property described as having changed hands after Turner's death," says Pye, "an important portion is unaccompanied by any written or traditional history of how it came to pass out of the possession of the great painter. No unlettered proofs were published by Turner There is reason to believe that Turner himself never parted with any unlettered proofs of the plates, and that those taken from the plates he himself engraved were unknown to the public till since his death. To say that he gave them away would be to libel his character, and

nobody would believe it. Neither is it less difficult to believe that he sold them to a printseller at a price so low as to enable the dealer to sell them again for two shillings, or even double that sum ; for Turner's own selling price of lettered proofs was two guineas each number of five, or upwards of eight shillings each proof for ready-money only ; and there are good reasons for believing that he never allowed of discount on that price, even to his most intimate acquaintances." I find also the following less guarded opinion in one of Pye's notebooks :—" They had been, no doubt, stolen, probably by the printer. That they were stolen I have no doubt, from the fact that they had never been stitched up in the work. They were all devoid of the holes made by the needle of the stitcher in every proof and print regularly passed into the world by the publisher." There is, however, another theory, which some of the facts above related may entitle us to hope will prove to be the true one. When Turner charged his namesake, the engraver, with stealing proofs, it was, as we have seen, discovered that the painter had himself given them away in discharge of small debts, and it has been further shown that other instances are on record of his having disposed of works by his hand in a similar manner. May not these impressions have found their way into the market through the like channel ?

Pye estimated the value received by Mr. Griffith for his collection at upwards of £400. Of this

amount £300 were laid out with him by Colnaghi and Co., in 1852, and he had also dealings with other printsellers, and with art-amateurs. Among the latter was Pye himself, who had long been a collector of *Liber* prints.*

The revelation of this wealth of proofs infused new life into the *Liber* market, and prices continued to rise steadily for the next twenty years.

"Copies," says Pye, "of the whole fourteen numbers had been sold in the market as low as £3, and latterly as high as £28. Single prints had been as low as 2s. and 3s. each, while fine impressions of favourite subjects have been sold by D. Colnaghi and Co. and Mr. Halsted at 21s. each."

The following letters were put together by

* Pye made the following note of his own dealing with Mr. Griffith; and it derives a permanent interest from the fact that the Pye collection is now in the British Museum:—

"The proprietor of this precious lot of property declined to sell for money, but was willing to exchange for works of art. Hence I sought to obtain by exchanges that which money could not buy. The result was, I acquired seven proofs, *i.e.*

{ 2 'Aesacus and Hesperie'	1 unlettered and 1 lettered
{ 1 'Chepstow Castle'	1 "
{ 1 'The Wye'	1 "
{ 1 'Watercress Gatherers'	1 "
1 'Mer de Glace'	1 "
1 'Ben Arthur'	1 "

"For the first three I gave a drawing by Landseer, worth £25. For the 'Wye' and the 'Watercress Gatherers' I gave a drawing by Robson worth £12; for 'Mer de Glace' I gave Landseer's Palette, with the dog painted by him thereon, £10; for 'Ben Arthur,' drawing by Cox, £4. Total £51."

Mr. Pye as evidence "showing the low ebb of the value of prints of the *Liber* from the stoppage of the publication, and of the progressive rise of the value of them from Turner's death."

" 14, PALL MALL EAST,

" Jan. 15, 1850.

" DEAR SIR,

" We beg leave to inform you that we should charge from 15s. to 21s., for the plates of the *Liber Studiorum*, taken separately, according to the nature of the subjects.

" We are, dear Sir,

" Your obedient Servants,

" For P. and D. Colnaghi and Co., A. MACKAYE.

" John Pye, Esq."

" HAYMARKET,

" Jan. 5, 1852.

" DEAR SIR,

" In reply to your question respecting Turner's *Liber Studiorum*, I beg to inform you that I have a collection of miscellaneous impressions in various states, varying in price from 15s. to three guineas.

" I am, dear Sir,

" Yours truly,

" John Pye, Esq."

" J. HOGARTH.

"PALL MALL EAST,

"June 10, 1852.

"DEAR SIR,

"In the spring of 1852 we sold a number of proof impressions of plates engraved by Charles Turner, A.R.A., for J. M. W. Turner's *Liber Studiorum*. Many of them were in peculiar undescribed states, and all of the finest quality. The price of these impressions varied from two to three guineas, and for some of the proofs before letters (artist's proofs) we got five guineas each. Were these last proofs in our hands at this time we could sell them for a much higher sum than I have named. We have within these last few days purchased of Mr. Charles Turner the proofs of the plates which he engraved, touched during the progress of the work by his great namesake; some of which we have sold for £15 each. This price may appear to old Turner collectors as very high; but in addition to the extraordinary beauty of Turner's touching, we consider that the autograph directions to the engraver which are written upon them add immensely to their value.

"I remain, dear Sir,

"Yours sincerely,

"PAUL AND DOMINIC COLNAGHI AND CO.

"John Pye, Esq."

" BOND STREET,

" 18th April, 1853.

" SIR,

" On referring to my book, I find that I bought proofs of *Liber Studiorum* plates engraved by Say, at the sale of his effects in the latter end of 1841, and that the price was, on the average, 2s. 6d. each. Shortly afterwards these proofs were sold by me at 7s. 6d. each the lettered, and 10s. each the unlettered. Afterwards I bought some of these again at 31s. 6d. each.

" Sets of the work I have bought at various times and at various prices, £3 the lowest, £28 5s. the highest, and that for which I paid £3 was as fine as any that has come into my possession. Single prints of the work I have frequently bought in the trade at 2s. and 3s. each.

" At the period of Say's sale there were so few private buyers that few or none of the trade would give any price for them. The case is very much altered now, by the desire the amateur collectors of works of art evince to possess them. I have recently * seen Christie sell for £8 8s. a proof of the *Liber* that I had sold for £1, which was, after it

* Here Pye makes the following note :—" The sale was that of the collection of prints of the late Mr. Burke, nephew of the great man of that name. It took place at Christie's, June, 1852. The subject of the print 'Solitude' or 'The Magdalene.'" In Pye's opinion it was much over valued, having been "printed after the plate had been repaired." It "passed into Mr. Hawkins's collection."

left me, and before it was placed in the hands of Messrs. Christie and Manson, in the possession of another printseller, who sold it for 7s.

"What price the people's growing sense of Turner's merits may yet give to these works I cannot tell, for there are now many buyers, and as the subjects were engraved upon *copper*, which by reason of its softness and the fact that mezzotinto lies on the surface, necessarily renders the fine impressions few and difficult to obtain. It may be worthy of remark that of all the many copies of *Liber Studiorum* which have come under my notice, I have never seen one of consecutive good impressions. Each copy of the work called *Proofs* is a like mixture of good and bad.

"I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

"John Pye."

"F. HALSTED.

[The original of the above letter is among the papers which were placed in the hands of the Keeper of Prints, when Pye sold his collection to the British Museum.]

In June 1862 there comes a letter from Mr. Halsted announcing that he has been entrusted with the sale of a set of proofs in the first published state, all very fine, and in the very finest possible condition, at the price of 200 guineas.

"Now," writes Pye, in 1867, "the *Liber* being regarded as a great triumph of British Art, good impressions of its plates are rarely purchaseable in the market."

The few "good impressions," he declares, in a strain of enthusiasm, "are being sought after by amateurs of Turner's genius, at home and abroad, and while we see them radiating the civilized world, it would be folly to name any sum as the ultimate limit of their value, for the difficulty of obtaining them is of course progressively increasing."

The changes of ownership in Mr. Lahee's set of printer's proofs exhibit the upward course of the market in these years. Although no longer unique, their value became enhanced by the general awakening of competition. Lupton purchased them in 1852 for £200 (or guineas), and offered them to the British Museum for £250; which offer was refused. Soon afterwards they were heard of as being in the hands of Messrs. Colnaghi, by whom they were sold to Mr. Haywood Hawkins, of Brignor Park, Sussex; and they then became the nucleus of his celebrated collection of *Liber* proofs. In May 1865, these were again dispersed under the hammer of Messrs. Sotheby, Wilkinson and Co., and the printer's set of seventy-one were bought in one lot by Messrs. Agnew for £450 (or guineas).

In 1869, the sale of Mr. Dillon's collection of prints took place at Sotheby's, when a complete set, said to have been first states, were sold for £230. Some of the rare artist's proofs fetched from £18 to £42; and single etchings varied in price from 5 to 30 guineas.

But a further event occurred in the history of the sale of this remarkable work, which Pye does not seem to have fully anticipated. The great sale at Christie's, by order of the Court of Chancery, of all the prints and plates in Turner's possession at the time of his death, took place in 1873 and 1874, in the course of the last year of the old engraver's life. An immense and unsuspected stock of impressions were then discovered to have been stored up, and to have long lain dormant in the painter's gloomy house in Queen Anne Street. Turner had "kept back," writes Mr. Rawlinson, "the fine impressions, of which he still possessed considerable numbers; and it was not until after his death that their existence even was known." The limit of the supply seemed then to have been reached. "No more copies," writes the compiler of the American catalogue, in 1874, "remain to be brought into the market. Of original impressions of the complete work there were but twenty-two copies, and these brought prices ranging from 850 to 270 guineas. A few copies on thick paper, taken off after the plates had become deteriorated, brought much lower prices. Fine impressions of single plates brought from £15 to £50 a piece." Mr. Rawlinson calculates that about 5,000 engravings and 700 etchings from *Liber* plates were then sold, for nearly £18,000.

Starting, however, from this new point of departure, Mr. Rawlinson's estimate of the future is similar to that made by John Pye. "Since 1873,"

says the later authority, "dealers and collectors having then had so exceptional an opportunity of filling their portfolios, the prices have, especially for second-rate impressions, fallen somewhat below those which obtained before the sale ; but fine First States of the interesting subjects are to-day worth from 4 to 10 guineas, and fine Second States from 2 to 4 guineas each. Some of the rarer plates command even higher prices. Looking at the limited number of good impressions which the most skilfully managed mezzotint plate can have yielded, it is not improbable that, with the growing appreciation of Turner—the growing interest in landscape art—and, above all, the growing love of collecting, as wealth and leisure are increasing, these prices may be greatly further augmented." The latest records of the sale-room seem to accord with this prediction ; for a set of the *Liber* was sold at Christie and Co.'s on May 3, 1879, for £351.

CHAPTER VI.

Liber Collections—Stokes's—Its Sale and Dispersion—Estimated Value—Hawkins Collection—Thornbury's Valuation—Pye Collection—Hampstead Conversazione—Sale to British Museum—Royal Academy—Turner and the Clipstone Street Society—Dr. Percy's Set at South Kensington—Mr. Taylor's Collection—Pye's Description of his own Collection.

No history of the *Liber Studiorum* could be regarded as complete without a notice of the most celebrated collections which have been made by amateurs of the work; and, even in the present imperfect sketch, some reference to those that are gone will not be out of place.

It is in the nature of such fabrics to live and die like their possessors. They are successively brought together, and again scattered, and their elements become variously incorporated during a process of continual transmigration. After years of embodiment and patient accretion, they are subject to be completely and often suddenly disbanded. Several wealthy portfolios of *Libers* have already met with this fate, and their treasures gone to enrich the contents of others. It would in most cases be futile to attempt to revive, even in imagination, the glories of bygone collections, or to trace from one possessor to another the course of single unique or valued impressions. But the names of some of the

old collectors may be expected long to survive the demolition of their laborious structures, and to be handed down to posterity in connection with the work itself and its great author.

Perhaps the most celebrated of these early worshippers at the shrine of Turner was the late Mr. Charles Stokes. In reference to the *Liber* proofs which C. Turner and Mr. Griffith brought into the market after J. M. W. Turner's death, Pye writes:—"One of the competitors for these rare specimens of Turner's learning and genius in design and chiaroscuro, who enriched their collections already imperfectly formed, and who went into the competition irrespective of money considerations, was Mr. Stokes, of Gray's Inn, Turner's stockbroker and intimate acquaintance. That gentleman not only formed a set of splendid proof impressions of the seventy-one subjects, but he enriched it with a large number of proof impressions of plates in their progressive state, all of which had been touched on by Turner himself. No doubt he paid for his whistle, but the collection he made did honour to himself,—and his country."

"The collection thus made," adds Pye, "instead of being destined to become a national monument, honourable to the memory of Turner and of Mr. Stokes, was on Mr. Stokes's death destined to be dispersed again. For his will had bequeathed it to "a lady," who, having immortalized herself by writing her name on the back of each print of

the collection, and having estimated their value £5,000, offered the property to the Trustees of the British Museum for that sum, which they declined." The late Mr. Carpenter, the then Keeper of Prints, told Pye that the Trustees would have consented to buy the collection for £2,500. That was early in 1860. Subsequently it was placed "in the hands of Mr. Griffith of Norwood, to be broken up, as a collection, by selling singly the impressions to Art amateurs; he having assured the lady that by so doing he could realize £5,000." Turner's old agent "had," as Pye significantly remarks, "acquired some practical knowledge in the art of dealing . . .

"In 1861, a few months before the death of Mr. Griffith," he continues, "I enquired of him as to the progress of the sale of that work; to which he replied that he had received on account upwards of £2,500, and that he had no doubt that the stock on hand would realize at least as much more. Whether he ultimately realized the £5,000 will probably never be made publicly known."

"The breaking-up of Mr. Stokes's collection opened up to Mr. Hawkins a source of wealth applicable to enriching his collection of touched rare proofs, of which he liberally availed himself." His collection has already been mentioned as containing Lahee, the printer's, set of proofs. These, and all Mr. Hawkins's *Libers*, were sold with the rest of his prints, English and foreign, through the agency of Messrs. D. Colnaghi and Co., in 1865;

and Mr. Mackaye, of that firm, informed Pye that the whole collection of *Liber* prints thus sold produced £2,300. "The duplicate proofs, of which there were many, touched and untouched, were sold singly, at prices of which," adds Pye, "I have no knowledge."

Pye's note to the above effect was made by way of commentary on a passage in Mr. Thornbury's "Life of Turner," which refers in the following terms to a third collection:—"The Stokes and Hawkins collections of the *Liber Studiorum*," says that writer, "it is true have gone to pieces; but Mr. Pye's, even a richer and a fuller one, still remains intact."* This account of Pye's store of prints must, however, be regarded as another of the inaccurate statements which abound in Thornbury's book. That biographer, having further declared that a "complete set of the *Liber* was £3,000 or more,"† and having cited Pye as his principal authority respecting the work in question, the latter replied, in the *Athenæum* of February 26, 1862, "I am of opinion that nobody ever heard of a complete set of the *Liber Studiorum* being worth £3,000, till Mr. Thornbury (on my authority) told them that such was the case. A collection of proofs of the plates of that work has been valued at £5,000, but a 'complete set' of the work, and a collection of duplicates and triplicates of its embellishments,

* "Life of J. M. W. Turner, R.A.," first edition, vol. i, p. viii.

† *Ib.* p. 274.

are different matters." Yet the biographer persisted to the last in this absurd statement. It is retained in the edition revised by him in 1876; and still passes current. Lately, it has reappeared in a form based probably on an imperfect recollection of the above correspondence, and curiously illustrating the growth of historical records. In a list of a collection of the engraved works of Turner, exhibited in 1878 in Bond Street, which list forms an appendix to Mr. Ruskin's* "Notes on his Drawings by Turner," exhibited there at the same time, the following information is given in a note descriptive of the *Liber Studiorum*:—"A fine set of *Libers* is now a possession of great value, that belonging to the late J. Pye, the engraver, and which consists of rare proofs, having been purchased by the nation for the sum of £3,000."

It is only just to the memory of Mr. Pye to correct this statement, and narrate the events referred to as they really occurred. Pye had, as we have seen, been a collector of *Liber* prints before Turner's death; and his collection, which, excellent as it afterwards became, can never have approached the unrivalled one of Stokes, was, eighteen years after that event, sold to the British Museum for £500. Those who knew John Pye in his later years, must remember the fond enthusiasm with which he would linger in contemplation of these gems, and dilate upon the beauty of their "effects" and their "*clair-obscur*." In the year 1857, he lent

* Mr. Ruskin was in no way answerable for this mistake.

his collection for exhibition at one of the interesting *conversazioni* which were held for a series of annual seasons in the assembly-rooms of the "Holly-bush" tavern at Hampstead, under the management of an intellectual society of artists and amateurs residing in the neighbourhood, of whom the late Mr. Edwin Field, the eminent solicitor and benefactor to art and artists, and a warm friend of Pye's, was a leading member. Pye's presence on the occasion, the weight and acuteness of his remarks, and the wiry figure of the hale old man (he was then in his seventy-fifth year, and he lived to his ninety-second) must still dwell in the remembrance of many of the inhabitants of that pleasant artistic suburb.

He seems to have regarded the *Liber Studiorum* as the depository of true principles belonging to a school of landscape which was in danger of passing away; and he was anxious that it should remain available in its most perfect form as a series of examples for the education of the taste of British artists of future generations. Over the want of appreciation of the work by leaders and instructors in art, he laments in the following terms:—

"At the time of Turner's death (1851), thirty-two years after the publication of the last part of the *Liber*, that work had not won much public favour, for even then no copy of it was to be found, either in the British Museum,* or in the Library of

* As regards the British Museum, this statement does not seem to be quite accurate. The present Keeper of Prints informs me, however, that the Museum had no set until July 8, 1848.

the Royal Academy of Arts of London. Neither acquired a copy till Turner had been dead twenty years. The Royal Academy," he characteristically adds, "had not deemed it worthy of a place in its library, in aid of the progress in Landscape Art."

Some young painters, however, who were looking after their own education, showed a higher appreciation of the value of the *Liber*. In December, 1844, when a copy was of little value in the market, the committee of the Society of Artists in Clipstone Street, Fitzroy Square, purchased one of Turner himself for fourteen guineas. I have been told, on what I believe to be good authority, that the painter, on hearing that the work was being bought by a society of students, returned one guinea as a donation to their funds.

Pye was desirous, in the interests of art, that his collection should be preserved as public property. It must have been within two years after its exhibition at Hampstead, that he offered it to the Royal Academy at, it is believed, the same price that the Museum afterwards paid, and which there appears to be little doubt, was considerably below its market value.* This offer was refused, to Pye's indigna-

* Pye's collection is something more than "a copy," as it is called in the Librarian's minute of the purchase, at the British Museum; for it contains repetitions of plates in various states. At the Turner sale in 1873 a "copy" is said to have sold for 800 guineas.

tion. While in this temper, and acting on the solicitation of the Keeper of Prints, he placed the collection in the hands of that functionary, with a view to its acquisition by the British Museum, and on the 13th of February, 1869, the Trustees, on Mr. Reid's recommendation, approved the purchase for £500. After this national acquisition, the Royal Academy, with the aid of the print-dealers, obtained a set, which is now in the library at Burlington House.

The collection at South Kensington was purchased from Dr. Percy, F.R.S., in 1865, for £500. It contains eighty-six impressions in all, including a complete set of the "First States," and fifteen variations. The prints are arranged, not in the order of publication, but in groups according to Turner's classification by the capital letters, H., E. P., P., M., and A.

Of collections now in the hands of private possessors, the most varied and extensive is probably that of Mr. John Edward Taylor.

At a risk of repeating a few statements of things well known, I here transcribe, in conclusion, Pye's account of his own collection, from a manuscript of his at the British Museum.

"An unique collection of 156 proofs and print impressions in various states, of the 71 subjects which between 1806 and 1820 were published in the 'Liber Studiorum' by J. M. W. Turner.

“The history of this collection, and its importance, may be conceived when the circumstances of the publication of the *Liber Studiorum* are recalled thus :—

“The copper plates on which the subjects of the work were executed having failed, so exquisitely delicate was the engraving, to produce more than from twenty to thirty fine impressions, Turner himself, in order to carry on the work, executed from time to time all the needful reparations upon the copper plates ; and thus impressions were obtained which constituted a series of ‘Liber’ *prints* distinguished among amateurs of Turner’s productions as impressions of the plates in their ‘second’ and ‘third’ *states* of repair. These ‘states’ were consequently less valuable than impressions which had been taken from the plates in their original condition. Yet, being the results of Turner’s genius and profound knowledge of *chiaroscuro*, even these states were valuable on account of their presenting collectively most of the subjects of the original work under the influence of what may be called ‘Effects’ No. 2, 3, and sometimes 4.

“Even in an original copy of the ‘Liber’ each subject appears under ‘Effect No. 1’ only. The result of bringing the whole together in a series of impressions such as that in question is to open to the student and *amateur* in art a source of instruction and delight which has hitherto been unknown. The wealth of this collection will be appreciated

by considering that it includes a series of impressions of the seventy-one plates in their various states.

“JOHN PYE,

“Landscape Engraver; one of the Correspondents of the Imperial Institute of France; and Honorary Member of the Imperial Academy of Arts, St. Petersburg.

“Feb. 13, 1869.”

APPENDIX.



LIST OF PLATES OF THE SERIES P. AND E. P.

Part.	Published.	P. (Pastoral.)	E. P. (Epic Pastoral.)
I.	20 Jan., 1807	Bridge and Cows*	Woman and Tambourine
II.	20 Feb., 1808	Straw Yard	Okehampton Castle Castle above the Meadows Boy Piping
III.	10 June, 1808	<i>"Pembury Mill, Kent"</i>	Bridge in Mid-Distance Sun between Trees
IV.	29 Mar., 1809	Farmyard with Cock	<i>"Drawing of the Clyde"</i>
V.	1 Jan., 1811	<i>"Juvenile Tricks"</i>	Hindoo Worshipper Hindoo Devotions
VI.	1 June, 1811	Windmill and Lock	Junction of Severn and Wye*
VII.	1 June, 1811	<i>"Young Anglers"</i>	<i>"St. Catherine's Hill, near Guildford"</i>
VIII.	1 Feb., 1812	<i>"Water-Mill"</i>	Woman at a Tank Hindoo Ablutions
IX.	23 Ap., 1812	<i>"Winchelsea, Sussex"</i>	Bridge and Goats
X.	23 May, 1812	<i>"Hedging and Ditching"</i>	<i>"River Wye"</i> Chepstow Castle
XI.	1 Jan., 1816	<i>"Solway Moss"</i>	Solitude Reading Magdalen
XII.	1 Jan., 1816	<i>"Norham Castle, on the Tweed"</i>	Raglan Castle
XIII.	1 Jan., 1819	<i>"Watercress Gatherers, Rail's Head, Ferry Bridge, Twickenham"</i>	Twickenham—Pope's Villa Garrick's Temple and Hampton Church The Alcove
XIV.	1 Jan., 1819	<i>"East Gate, Winchelsea, Sussex"</i>	<i>"Isis"</i>

[The names in *Italics* are titles given by Turner himself. The other names are those by which the plates are generally known.]

* See the frontispiece to these pages.

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